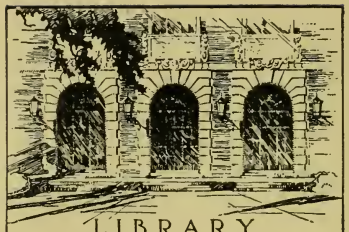

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NATURE'S NOBILITY.

A Novel

IN THREE VOLUMES.

By JOHN NEWALL.

VOL. III.

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NATURE'S NOBILITY.

CHAPTER I.

MENTAL ANXIETIES.

When Mrs. Moore reached home, her forebodings of evil were great and manifold. She scarcely touched the ample meal which, in the shape of a dinner tea, she had specially provided for this *jour de l'an* hoping that this time, at least, Moore would forsake his annual evil way and come home with his wife.

Mattie, on the contrary, did not change her opinion as to his safe return, and said that if his ghost did make its appearance it would be very stout and healthy looking.

But Mrs. Moore was not to be comforted. When the clock struck nine she

looked inclined to cry, when it struck ten she cried outright, and proposed to go in search of Moore's dead body.

This made Mattie laugh, whereupon Mrs. Moore turned sharply upon her, and said that when she was married she would perhaps have the feelings of a married woman, but not till then.

What Mattie might have replied it is impossible to say, for no doubt there would have been a reply and a rejoinder also; but at this moment Moore's voice, bidding good-night to Wright, was heard outside, and then Mrs. Moore shut up the waterworks department and assumed a rigid attitude.

Mattie ran to the door and opened it for her father and gave him a kiss, and seeing that her mother had put on the deeply injured look, laughingly said,—

"Father, here's mother been burying you for more than an hour."

Moore, who on stepping out of the trap

had the "morose" upon him, cheered up at once under Mattie's reception, and going up to his wife said,—

"Jane, thou art a good wife, none better; but don't be cross because I stayed a little longer at Cobford. Thou knowest that it is the only day in the year I can learn something new in my way of business," and with that he put his manly arm round her neck, and who should be on the other side but Mattie lifting her mother's arm round his neck, and there it stayed.

A knock was heard at the door, and in reply to "Who's there?" "Joseph," was the answer.

Joseph entered in a state of perturbation. Master Lawrie, he said, could not sleep. After he had been put to bed by Mattie he had called out several times, and when Joseph went to him he spoke of a poor man having been killed, and put his hands to his eyes and shuddered.

Mattie took a shawl, and telling Joseph that Lawrie had better sleep with her that night, she went to the boy's room, and wrapping the shawl round him carried him to her own room, laid him in bed, and was soon by his side.

Often during the night he started up and clung to Mattie, the face of the dying man haunting him in his dreams.

Lawrie's stay of three weeks was just approaching its close.

Mr. Henry had daily felt his heart yearn more and more towards the boy.

Joseph delighted to minister to his fancies, and Moore always looked out for him early in the morning when the feeding took place, and no end of hunting up and down had to be gone through before he could be brought in to breakfast.

One morning Mattie was sent for by Mr. Henry, and on her entering the latter said,—

"Mattie, I have a letter from Mrs. Robert,

saying that she is going to Breezemere at the end of the week, and wishes Lawrie to join her, and she desires me to say that she will be very glad if you will take Lawrie to her and stay a week for a change."

Mattie was very glad of the invitation, for she had never seen salt water, and although Breezemere was not on the open sea, still it was sufficiently near to give a taste of the invigorating air from the ocean. Mr. Henry asked her to put Lawrie's clothes together and be ready to go the next day but one, when the carriage would take them to catch the passenger packet on the canal, which plied between Lumechester and Breezemere.

Immediately afterwards Mattie was seen posting a note at the village post-office, and to whom it was addressed our female readers need not be told.

The next day was one of leave taking.

Lawrie confided the future of the little

porker to Joseph, with divers injunctions that he must be sure to write regularly and say how he was. The foal and the calf received many parting embraces.

The birds, it was arranged, should have their liberty, and all took their departure from prison except one special favourite, a goldfinch, which, instead of flying away, perched on Lawrie's shoulder, and Mattie determined that he should remain with her to remind her of Lawrie.

On the day of Lawrie's departure the carriage came to the door in better "form" than usual. The spruce turn-out from Lumechester had put the landlord of the "Spotted Deer" on his metal. Joseph's pride was accordingly satisfied, and he mounted the box with the feeling that his master's dignity and his own had been properly regarded.

The carriage, with Mr. Henry facing the horses, and Lawrie by his side, and Mattie opposite, and the rocking horse

and turn-down bedstead and its belongings and Lawrie's box and Mattie's strapped on the top, drove away amidst the respectful good-byes of many of the villagers, who had assembled to see Lawrie off.

They speedily passed over the ground between Whicham and the bridge where the barge stopped to let out Basford, and there waited for the packet-boat. They could see the caps of the little jockeys, who rode the really fine well-bred horses which drew the boat along at the rate of eight miles an hour, for a considerable time before it reached the bridge; for the windings of the canal were so various and erratic that they sometimes seemed close to and immediately afterwards seemed to recede instead of approaching.

Joseph stood on the bridge signalling for the packet to stop, and so soon as he was seen from on board, a shrill whistle caused the little jockeys to slacken speed, and the boat glided to the bank and was brought up.

When Lawrie had to say good-bye to his godpapa he then, and not before, for he was delighted at the idea of joining his mamma, felt how happy he had been with the kind old gentleman, and the latter at the last moment was quite overcome by his feelings.

Mingled with his love for the boy was the feeling of regret, nay, even remorse, at the expiry of the lease without the possibility of the estate going to Lawrie, as he himself so much wished, and as Mr. Robert fully expected. And he could not but picture to himself what might be said of him after his death; how his pride would be commented upon by those he loved, and that he would descend to the grave without leaving a single memento of his existence. And when he thought of Mr. Robert's just character and the gentleness of Mrs. Robert, and her love for her youngest boy, the tears rolled down his venerable cheeks as he kissed his

godson and said "God bless you, my boy."

Little Lawrie having no conception of the real cause of his grief, asked him if he was crying about his dear sister, whose eyes followed him wherever he went, and this caused a fresh outburst of tears from the good old man's eyes, until he could do nothing but place his hand on the boy's head as if giving him a parting blessing, and motion to Joseph to take him to the boat.

A whistle from the steersman, and the little jockeys vaulted upon their horses, and dexterously slowing, to avoid a jerk, started off the boat again.

Lawrie could not sufficiently admire those bold little fellows, who dashed at the low pitched bridges at full canter lying upon their horses, otherwise they would have been caught by the buttresses, and jumped on and off when going at full speed.

Late in the day they reached Breezemere, and found Mrs. Robert waiting their arrival.

Lawrie's bronzed face was the wonder of all, even the "dear little sister" hesitated to kiss "such a brown boy;" but Mrs. Robert was greatly delighted at his improved appearance, and taking Mattie's hand thanked her for her care of her boy.

She had seen Mattie before, and appreciated her worth, and knowing that she was engaged, asked after young Cuthbertson, and wished her every happiness.

Lawrie, young as he was, could not but notice his mother's altered look since he left for Whicham. He pressed her face, whilst she held him in her arms, against her pale cheeks—such a contrast—and said that his dear mamma should go to Whicham and catch birds and feed the chickens, and drink the milk warm from the cows, and get well; and then a tear trickled down Mrs. Robert's cheek, and she bent her head over his brown curls and kissed him most lovingly, whilst she looked as if a sharp pain had passed through her heart.

Breezemere was a pretty town a few miles down the river, or rather the estuary, on which Wilderspool was situated.

The expanse of water at this point was very fine, and was alive all day long with boats and barges in full sail; for here all the goods from Lumechester and the other manufacturing towns in the neighbourhood passed for export abroad.

There was a fine old ruin of a castle which commanded an extensive view of the estuary and the neighbourhood.

The little town was well supplied with articles of domestic consumption, and pretty white-washed dwellings lay by the side of the water, and offered fair accommodation to visitors.

The one which Mrs. Robert occupied was of a superior class, and stood high above the water's edge, with a grass plot in front, where she sat and watched the sails on the estuary, and looked on the scene on the beach, where children were

launching their tiny boats or making sand puddings.

Immediately opposite to the house was the bathing place, where lay the ugly bathing machines, more like dens for wild beasts than anything else, attended by fat, frowzy old women, whose very appearance was enough to frighten a child, and who handled the little bathers with about as much gentleness as a shepherd uses in washing sheep.

Gentle reader, were you ever at Biarritz when the late Emperor Napoleon and his beautiful, amiable, and accomplished wife paid one of their annual visits? There you would see the poetry of bathing. The elegant "Etablissement des Bains" was crowded with visitors of rank from Spain, as well as from all parts of France.

The groups produced by the imagination of Watteau do not present a greater variety of colours and costumes than could daily be seen opposite the "Etablissement."

Parties of bathers changing form and colour like the kaleidoscope; now dancing, now swimming, now climbing the rocks in the beautiful bay, and plunging headlong into the water.

On the shore a fine military band playing newest dance music. Walking amidst the visitors, with the Empress on his arm, or attended by his aide-de-camp, the Emperor returned the salutes of those around him with the greatest affability, whilst the little Prince Imperial joined the visitors' children in their child's play.

Why should we persist in using the gloomy bathing machines and the torn dresses and ragged towels of our sea-bathing places, instead of enjoying the pleasure of a dip in the sea, clad in appropriate costume, with the warmth and light of the sun and the fresh breeze of the ocean upon us the while.

Mrs. Robert thought that a daily bath in salt water would do Lawrie good, and

accordingly the morning after his arrival Mattie went with the boy to the bathing place when the tide was at its height.

Mrs. Robert sat at her window and watched Mattie arrange for a machine, and saw Lawrie's struggles to escape from entering it.

They entered, the machine was moved into the water, and Mattie undressed the reluctant Lawrie, and consigned him to the arms of the bathing woman.

Lawrie, the moment he was handed to the woman, struggled violently, and loosing himself from her grasp fell into several feet depth of water.

Mattie gave a shriek and fainted.

Mrs. Robert heard the shriek and saw persons running in the direction of the machine.

Rushing from the house to the water's edge, she threw herself in to rescue her son, and getting into the current she was carried off her feet, and floated on the

surface of the water, supported by the inflation of her dressing gown.

Fortunately male attendants were near; one dived after the boy, and brought him out exhausted, and the other seized Mrs. Robert's dress, as she was fast being carried away by the wind and current, and dragged her ashore.

Clasping her son in her arms she struggled home deadly pale and faint. A doctor was at once sent for, and he advised that she should return home without delay, and the next day she and Lawrie, accompanied by a maid and by Mattie, left by the packet-boat and reached the Close.

Mr. Robert's heart sank within him as he assisted her from the carriage, and saw that her face was paler and thinner than when she left, and found her hand moister.

But she had a halo of joy around her heart—her son was saved.

CHAPTER II.

EMPTY BEGGING BOXES.

Mr. Godwin arrived at the Close the day after Mrs. Robert's return. He had recovered his valise which the guard of the coach had deposited at the booking-office in Lumechester.

The good kind soul wept bitterly as he placed his arm gently round his sister's neck and kissed her, so different was her look when he saw her about eighteen months before.

But Mrs. Robert would not admit that she was ill, only a little thin, and should be better soon, and she drew attention from the subject by asking about Mrs. Godwin and the children, and laughed gently at the honour conferred upon him by being sent for all the way from Severnworth to preach at Barport, and thereupon Mr. Godwin's mind became absorbed

upon the nineteen heads, and opening the parcel he disclosed the wondrous MS., and proposed to read one or two heads there and then.

But Mrs. Robert smiled, and said, "Not yet, my dear brother, we shall have time for that; and how do you know that I shan't sit opposite to you, and hear all your sermon at Barport, that is, unless all that mass of writing does not send me to sleep. "And, dear Erasmus," she said, turning over some of the leaves, and seeing how closely they were written, "don't you think it rather too long, looking at the hymns special to the occasion and all that, and that there must be time for a collection."

Mr. Godwin, for the first time, felt a little inward misgiving on the point, but replied that he would endeavour to take care of that. And then Mr. Robert came in, looking very pale and anxious on his wife's account, and the two brothers-in-law embraced each other affectionately.

Mr. Godwin gave them a short account of his journey, and the misfortune that befell him, and Mrs. Robert turned paler than before on hearing of the accident, and then laughed heartily at the idea of her good kind brother causing the upset of the coach, and looked happy again when he assured her that, except a shake, he was uninjured.

Saturday only intervened before the all-important day, and Mr. Godwin begged he might be excused from joining the family circle, as all his time would be occupied in preparation.

"But, my dear brother," said Mrs. Robert, smiling, "surely you are prepared, otherwise what is the meaning of all this paper. We have not met for a long time, and I want to talk to you. You will be all the better if you will put the sermon aside for a day and give your mind a rest."

"My dear sister," said Mr. Godwin, "it must not be. I have a very important

duty to perform, and even my love for you must give way to its imperative call. Be so kind as to let me have a writing table, with pen, ink, and paper, in my room, and let me be disturbed as little as possible until I have passed through this great ordeal."

The room vacated by Mr. Henry was placed at his service, and Mrs. Robert told him to make his own arrangements as to meals, and that the house should be kept as quiet as possible. It was fortunate that Lawrie had been sent to the Yews with Mattie the day after his arrival, to join his brothers and sisters.

Mrs. Robert leaving the room, Mr. Godwin and Mr. Robert were left alone, and then both gave vent to their feelings about Mrs. Robert. Mr. Robert, as before observed, was not a man to give way readily to emotion, but on this occasion, as he mentioned the opinion of the doctor, and referred to the shock to her system by the event at

Breezemere, the tears rolled down his cheeks, and his voice more than once stopped.

Mr. Godwin was not less affected, and they sat hand in hand showing the intense grief which they both suffered.

Mrs. Robert re-entered, and seeing at a glance that she had been the subject of their conversation, placed her arm round her husband's neck, and kissing him, said,—

"Erasmus, my husband will make it out that I am ill, and I'm not ill; and it's very naughty of him to tell you that I am. I shall be quite well shortly."

The cheerful way in which she spoke led them both to hope against hope, and dispelled the gloom they were under at first.

Miss Vandaleur heard of Mr. Godwin's arrival, and the next morning came to the Close, attired in the mode which Mr. Henry so greatly complimented her upon.

"So Erasmus has arrived," said she, "and I'm come to welcome him to the Close."

"But I am afraid," said Mrs. Robert, "that you cannot see him." You know he is going to preach a great sermon to-morrow at Barport, and he can't see anybody, not even you."

"What," replied Miss Vandaleur, "not his cousin only twice removed?"

"No, not even you; much as he admires his cousin," said Mrs. Robert.

Miss Vandaleur blushed slightly, for she liked admiration from all sources, though she much preferred it from unmarried men.

"Sure, then," said she, "he must be engaged indeed to forsake his own relations for the sake of preaching a sermon. It's what Mr. Henry wouldn't do."

And the little lady put on a very prettily arranged air of indignation, and taking out her gold snuffbox, gave it a sharp tap, indicative of her feelings, and took a pinch.

Mrs. Robert laughed heartily at this little ebullition, and said that she was sure

that Erasmus would be delighted to see her on Monday.

At this point the servant came in and told Mrs. Robert that a tall, masculine woman, who gave her name as Basford, would be very glad to be allowed to speak to her.

On the mention of the name she went deadly pale, and felt so glad that Lawrie was at the Yews.

Miss Vandaleur noticed the shock it gave Mrs. Robert, and said, "Now, dear, don't let yourself be put out of the way. It is the woman that took away Lawrie."

"It is indeed," said Mrs. Robert, with a shudder; "what can she want."

"Faith, dear," said Miss Vandaleur, "I'll go and see," and thereupon went into the hall where Mrs. Basford stood.

The latter made a low curtsey, but was confused at seeing Miss Vandaleur, who she knew at a glance was not Lawrie's mother, and could say nothing.

What is it that you want?" said Miss Vandaleur, sharply.

"Madam," said Mrs. Basford, "I should be glad to speak to Mrs. de Noel. I am Mary Basford. I took care of her child when he was taken away, and saved him from being turned into a factory boy, and I come about my husband, and not to beg money. He has been arrested and now is in prison, and oh, believe me, Madam, he is such a good man, and does not deserve to be transported, and I came to ask Mrs. de Noel to say a word to her husband for him, and (kneeling down) I will pray thus for her as long as I live."

Miss Vandaleur was very tender-hearted, and was much afraid of crying, as that would have injured her complexion; instead of which she took out her snuffbox, and gave it a hard tap, as if to remind herself of the duty that she owed to her face.

"Well, my good woman," said Miss Vandaleur, kindly, "I will speak to Mrs.

Robert, who is not very well, and ask if she can see you. But you must promise me not to excite her; for her nerves have been a good deal shaken of late, and you might make her ill."

Miss Vandaleur returned to Mrs. Robert, and spoke favourably of Mrs. Basford's appearance and manner, and Mrs. Robert determined to see her, even if it was only to learn from her that she had no intention of regaining possession of Lawrie. She ordered the servant to show her into the library, and, with Miss Vandaleur, went there.

Mrs. Basford first curtseyed, and then bursting into tears threw herself on her knees.

"Oh, madam, believe me," she said, "I would not hurt a hair of your darling boy's head. I did so take to him; he reminded me of my little George, now dead and gone, and I shall never forget the few hours of happiness that I spent with him.

I come to tell you that my husband has been taken up, and they say they will transport him. Poor fellow! He is such a God-fearing man, and would do nobody wrong, and only wants what's right for the working man. Do, dear madam—and she leaned forward and took hold of Mrs. Robert's dress—help me to save him from this dreadful punishment, and I will ever pray for you."

"Then you won't try to take my child away from me again," asked Mrs. Robert, and, taking her hand, told her to rise and be seated, and then they could talk quietly.

Miss Vandaleur, with a lace pocket-handkerchief was endeavouring to stop those destructive tears at their source, and was so much engaged in that occupation with one hand that the snuffbox remained tapless in the other.

Mrs. Basford then proceeded in an earnest, homely way to explain who her husband

was, and the part he had taken in the political agitation, and quite succeeded in winning over Mrs. Robert's sympathies, and the more so because she had satisfied her that she had not the least intention of taking away Lawrie.

Mrs. Robert said many kind words to Mrs. Basford, and insisted upon her having some refreshment after her long walk from Drawbridge, and offered her some money, thinking that she might be without means, which Mrs. Basford with many thanks refused, adding that shew as not in any want of money.

Mrs. Basford, on parting, took Mrs. Robert's hand and kissed it, and thanked her with much feeling, and Mrs. Robert promised to get her husband to intercede for Basford and that she should hear from her.

Immediately after Mrs. Basford left, Mrs. Smyley made her appearance, which rather surprised Mrs. Robert, as Saturday was a

day on which she seldom made a call, being usually occupied with assisting the doctor in preparing for the Sunday services.

Mrs. Robert, seeing the sedan chair at the door, went into the hall to meet her, and gave her the usual hearty welcome.

"My dear sister," said Mrs. Smyley, "I could not allow your brother to arrive without at once calling, with the doctor's compliments, to say how glad we shall be to see him, and besides that I have heard a rumour that you were nearly drowned at Breezemere, and wished to see if it be true."

There was more than usual cordiality about Mrs. Smyley on this occasion, and Mrs. Robert could not but appreciate her kindly feeling, not only to herself but to her brother, who, as a Dissenting Minister, did not at all times meet with a cordial greeting from a clergyman of the Established Church.

Mrs. Robert told her of the event at Breezemere, but made lightly of it.

Mrs. Smyley took her hand and said,

"My dear sister, you must indeed be careful of yourself. You have a severe trial of your strength before you, and you must not allow yourself to be excited. Pray, who is that tall, dark woman that I saw come down the steps just before I arrived?"

"Oh," said Mrs. Robert, "that is Mrs. Basford, whose husband snatched Lawrie from Mr. Henry's arms."

"Ah," said Mrs. Smyley, "she looks like a Jesuit in disguise. I have no doubt it is a man."

Mrs. Robert laughed heartily at the idea, and told her that she need not be under that impression, and that Mrs. Basford had promised not to interfere with her child.

Mrs. Smyley then spoke of Mr. Henry's call.

Now Mrs. Robert was so good and gentle that, although she felt hurt to think that, owing to her own request that he would call on Mrs. Smyley, he had been drawn

into the payment of £4 10s. yet she would not have mentioned it if Mrs. Smyley had not brought in Mr. Henry's name.

"My dear Mrs Smyley," she said, "there is one thing which preys a little on my mind and that is—" and here she paused —"that is, that our kind and generous cousin has paid you £4 10s; for what he did not want, and you know his income is limited."

"Tut! tut! child;" replied Mrs. Smyley, "if Mr. Henry can afford to drive up to my door in a carriage and four he can afford to contribute to the necessities of the poor and needy; and you know, child, that the little fund realized by the sermons and hymns goes to that purpose, and not to the doctor or myself, for we never touch a penny of it."

This Mrs. Robert knew, or at all events always thought was the case, and so she said no more on the subject.

"But, my dear sister," resumed Mrs.

Smyley, "what about your brother, I must see him before I go."

"Indeed, my dear Mrs. Smyley," said Mrs. Robert, "that, I think, is impossible."

"Impossible! Why?"

"Because my brother is going to preach a great charity sermon at Barport to-morrow, and is now engaged upon it, and no one has seen him to-day, not I even."

"In that case," said Mrs. Smyley, "I won't disturb him; for does not the doctor, when preparing for a great occasion, lock himself in his study, and I can't get a peep even at his little finger."

"Won't you come into the drawing-room, Miss Vandaleur is there," said Mrs. Robert.

Now, between Mrs. Smyley and Miss Vandaleur there was no sympathy. The latter laughed at the coal-scuttle bonnet and unstudied attire of Mrs. Smyley, and the former owed Miss Vandaleur a grudge, because, nowithstanding all hints and innuendos, nothing could induce her to buy

a copy of the hymns and sermons. However, in deference to Mrs. Robert's feelings Mrs. Smyley assented, and when the two confronted each other in the drawing-room it was rather in the character of two fighting hens.

Mrs. Smyley, grasping her capacious umbrella midway, and holding it vertically, dipped the coal-scuttle bonnet with grim civility, and Miss Vandaleur, quite ready for the fray, dropped a curtsey, her face full of polite sarcasm.

Mrs. Smyley not speaking, and Miss Vandaleur being silent, the former again dipped the coal-scuttle bonnet, and the latter repeated the curtsey, saying,—

"It's mighty amusing, Mrs. Smyley; may be ye'll make me a present of the sermons and hymns for the next."

"If it was likely to do you any good," retorted Mr. Smyley, "I would."

Poor Mrs. Robert rushed between the combatants.

"My dear Mrs. Smyley—my dear cousin —for my sake be friends."

The appeal was not in vain. Mrs. Smyley was too good a woman at heart to quarrel, and Miss Vandaleur was too ladylike to continue the contest; so the latter held out her hand to Mrs. Smyley, and the impending storm passed over.

On the following day, Sunday, Mr. Godwin was still invisible until five o'clock in the evening, when a carriage was in readiness to convey him and Mr. Robert to Barport, the service commencing at half-past six.

Mrs. Robert saw her brother for a few minutes before he left, but so far as recognition on the part of Mr. Godwin was concerned, she might as well have been a perfect stranger. His mind was more and more elevated to the grand object of the hour, and Mrs. Robert could scarcely help laughing at his utter absorption, testified by his addressing her once as "my dear Sir."

He left the door leaning on the arm of

Mr. Robert, and, with eyes fixed on the ground, walked to the Cathedral gates, where the carriage was in waiting. He got in, the nineteen heads, as mere memoranda, being deposited at his side, and, after an hour's ride in silence, he and Mr. Robert reached the chapel, a large building, capable of holding nearly three thousand persons.

The deacons received him at the door, and with every respect conducted him to the vestry, where they left him with Mr. Robert.

Clad in the simple, but becoming, silk gown, then beginning to be adopted by the Independent Ministers, Mr. Godwin ascended the pulpit. His fine head and benevolent face made a favourable impression on the congregation, which was increased by the fervour of his prayer. The chapel was crowded in every part.

Great were the anticipations of the deacons as to the result of the appeal to the pockets of the congregation.

The sermon commenced but never seemed to end; the more it spread out from head to head the longer became the faces of the deacons.

Eight o'clock passed, and then came nine; and then by way of a suggestion to the worthy preacher the deacons directed the collectors to take their stations at the points allotted to them with their boxes in their hands.

Still no symptom of the end of the sermon.

One ingenious gentleman deposited a half crown in his collecting box, and gave it a shake, which sounded through the chapel, but it was lost to the ear of Mr. Godwin.

Then to the dismay of the deacons began the exodus.

Pew after pew gradually thinned, and when Mr. Godwin at ten o'clock sat down in the pulpit, the disappointed collectors went round to nearly empty benches.

But the good kind soul had no con-

ception of the state of the case; he knew that he had delivered one of the most eloquent discourses of the day, but he knew not the emptiness of the edifice, or the smallness of the collection.

On reaching the Close they found Mrs. Robert quite alarmed at their long absence, and anxiously inquired the cause.

Mr. Robert was silent, but Mr. Godwin expatiated in glowing terms on the evident effect produced by his sermon upon an attentive audience, and mentioned regretfully two or three points which he had unfortunately omitted to dwell upon.

Mrs. Robert knew how grateful to him was the roast fowl which, every Sunday evening after the day's services, was placed before him by the tender care of his wife. How, after the first wing, he invariably condemned himself for giving way to the lusts of the flesh, and how, nevertheless, he consented to play with the thick part of the leg; and as his wife nursed his tired

limbs, she blamed him for the length of his sermons, which he on the contrary always spoke of as full of imperfections and omissions of which he ought to be ashamed.

Mrs. Robert had the roast fowl ready, and met his protestations against fleshly indulgences by slyly dropping another wing on his plate; fondly taking his legs into her charge, she nursed them on her knees, and laughingly objected to all his accusations of shortcomings.

Dear old soul! let us drop a tear to thy memory. If ever there was a mind free from deceit or guile thine was; if ever there was a being devoted to his Creator, and only anxious for His glory, thou wast.

CHAPTER III.

A BULL BAIT.

That youthful pickle, Lawrie's brother Will, had the Yews all to himself as it were. Amongst other articles of furniture which had been imported from the Close was a cane, with which Master Will was intimately acquainted, and which, whenever he could lay his hands upon it, he hid away.

Neither father nor mother was there to curb his predilection for mischief. The old nurse was the victim of his pranks, and although Woods, the gardener, was specially enjoined to watch his proceedings and report progress, he was the aider and abetter of all his mischief.

The latter brought with him to the Yews a small brass cannon, and, having invested his weekly allowance in gunpowder,

the report of this piece of ordnance was constantly disturbing the neighbours.

The studious old vicar, whose meditations were seriously interfered with by these proceedings, remonstrated with Will, but to no effect; indeed it rather increased the nuisance. At last unable to suffer the infliction any longer, the vicar had recourse to what appeared to him an admirable stratagem.

He made his appearance at the Yews when Master Will was in the height of enjoyment, at finding that, by largely increasing the charge, he could produce a louder report than before, and was in the act of loading the cannon up to the very muzzle when the Vicar appeared.

"My boy," said the good old man, "what will you take for that cannon?"

"Five shillings," said Will, having paid only half a crown for it at an old metal shop.

"There is the money," said the Vicar,

and he walked away highly delighted with his purchase.

Will, at the time he bought the cannon, had wistfully looked at another more than twice as big and double the price, but his finances did not enable him to buy it.

Woods was going to the Close that afternoon, so Will instructed him where to find the shop, and described the big cannon, and handed him the five shillings with some accumulations of pocket-money to pay for gunpowder, adding strict injunctions that he must not say anything about it to his father or mother, and that he must say that he was attending to his lessons and conducting himself like a good boy, and ended by telling him to buy himself a pint of ale out of the money.

Then, being in want of occupation, he determined to have a bath, and that Lawrie should have one too, and begin to learn to swim. So going to a part of the grounds, out of sight of the house, and

where the stream was wide and deep, they undressed.

Now Lawrie was a lad of courage, and when he felt so frightened at Breezemere it was at the dungeon of a machine, and the coarse woman in her ugly bathing dress, and her forcible grasp of him and sudden dip into the water, without giving the boy any encouragement, or a minute or two to look at the water. But in company with his brother, and the bright sky and trees and flowers all about, and the spaniel swimming in the stream, he felt no fear, and when Will told him to jump in and not be afraid, as he and Cora would take care he was not drowned, he threw himself in without hesitation, and was followed by Will, who was a strong boy for eleven and a good swimmer, and who caught him as he rose to the surface and told him to put his hands on his shoulders, which he did, and swam away with him, followed by Cora, which wanted

to seize him and take him ashore. And then Will got him into a shallow part, and put his hand under his chest, and taught him to strike out with his arms and legs, and after a good bath they dressed, and Lawrie never felt frightened at the water afterwards, but soon became a good swimmer.

In the evening Woods returned with the big cannon and gunpowder, and before many minutes were over the worthy vicar was startled from his post-prandial nap by reports louder than before.

"There's that lad Will at it again," he said to his wife, "he's the most mischievous young imp in the parish," and then a fatal omission in the morning's bargain dawned upon him. He had not contracted that he would not buy another cannon.

"Why, my dear," said his wife, "what could you have been thinking of? No doubt he has bought another cannon, and a bigger one, for it sounds so much louder."

"I'll go and see after it at once," said the Vicar. So with that he put on his hat and made his way to the Yews.

Will heard the ring of the gate bell, "That's the old Vicar," said Will, picking up the cannon, hot as it was, and telling Woods, who stood by enjoying the fun, not to tell the Vicar where he was, he dragged Lawrie away with him, and hid in the shrubbery.

Woods put on a serious look, and opening the gate touched his hat.

"Has there been any firing of cannon going on here?" asked the Vicar.

"Yes, Sir," replied Woods, "once or twice, Sir, Master Will."

"Don't tell me once or twice," said the Vicar, quite angry; "a regular bombardment, it awoke me at the Vicarage. Where is the boy?"

"Don't know, Sir," said Woods, touching his hat again.

"Then I shall write to his father. He disturbs all the neighbourhood. He is

constantly in some kind of mischief. It was only yesterday he set his dog at my cat, and immediately afterwards I saw him driving two pigs into a pond ; and not content with doing it himself he got his little brother to help him."

With that the Vicar left in great dudgeon, and as soon as Woods had closed the gate on him, that worthy, putting his hands to his side, roared with laughter.

On Will emerging from his hiding-place and Wood's reporting what had taken place, the former instituted a diligent search for the obnoxious cane, and having found it hid it away on a shelf in the play-room.

The period of which we write was the age of birch-rod and cane. Spare the rod and spoil the child was a scholastic and household truism, and probably no Prime Minister of the days of the III. and IV. Georges, and William the IV., could boast of having escaped the traditional punishment

as a public school boy. It may have been in some cases carried to an improper extent, but rarely so ; and it certainly induced habits of obedience and respect unknown in these days.

In the evening Woods came to Master Will with the news that there was to be a grand bull bait in the neighbourhood the following day, and the latter, highly delighted, determined to witness the spectacle and take Lawrie wth him. Woods described where the event was to come off, but thought it expedient to decline accompanying the young gentlemen, though he was going to see it.

Gentle reader, did you ever see a bull fight at Madrid? If not, suppose we describe one. Imagine yourself in a vast amphitheatre, almost circular in shape, open to the sky, and with boxes and seats all round capable of holding 15,000 spectators. The part fronting to the east, and protected from the afternoon rays of the sun,

and highly decorated, is appropriated to royalty and the nobility.

Between the arena and the seats runs a passage about eight feet wide, with doors which can be thrown across it, leaving an opening into the arena.

On the arrival of the Royal party a bugle sounds, and forthwith a cavalcade is formed, headed by a knight in ancient Spanish costume of black velvet and plumed hat, mounted on a fine charger splendidly caparisoned.

Then come the "spadas," or swordsmen, armed with long Toledo blades of the finest steel. These are the *élite* of the bull-fighters, men who, like our successful jockeys, have their valet and carriage, and own property. Their costume is expensive, the jacket vest and knee breeches are elaborated with gold or silver, and set off the tall well-made figure to great advantage. Fair hands (for don't the gentler sex admire men of courage) have worked the scarfs,

ornamented the white silk stockings, and made the rosettes for the light shoes.

Then follow other bull-fighters on foot, all gaily dressed in short velvet or cloth jackets, bright coloured scarfs round the waists, knee-breeches, white stockings, light shoes with rosettes, and hair tied in a knot at the back of the head.

First come the chulos, lithe active young men, with long red scarfs thrown over their shoulders. The duty of these is to excite the bull by running at him and throwing their scarfs in his face.

Next the bandilleros or dart-stickers, who, after the bull has exhausted much of his fury, face him, and, as he rushes at them, slip on one side and dexterously stick a dart into his neck, close to the spine.

Then follow the piccadores, on horses decorated with ribbons, the men clad in padded jackets and leggings, and armed with a pole tipped at the point with a short iron spike, sufficient to rip a

streak of flesh off the bull's back but not enough to disable him.

Three bullocks, with ribbons floating from their horns, and bells hanging from their necks, yoked abreast to a cross bar, to which are attached ropes to fix on the bull's head when put *hors de combat* and drag him away, close the procession.

The cavalier advances towards the Royal box, and, unsheathing his rapier, offers it for the acceptance of Royalty which is graciously declined.

The bugle sounds a second time, the doors at the western side of the arena are thrown open, and in rushes a large brindled bull, long hair hanging from his neck and chest, his eyes glaring with fury, for he has been tortured up to the proper pitch in his den before the doors leading from it into the arena are opened.

He stands for a moment apparently bewildered, but is not allowed time for consideration, for a chulo, rushing

towards him, flutters a red scarf before his eyes. This is a liberty not to be submitted to by the bull. He paws the ground and dashes after chulo who runs to the barrier and clears the top not a second too soon, for the thud of the horns against the barrier is heard as he disappears over it.

Another chulo takes his place, and the same scene occurs. Then a piccadore is seen moving his horse, which is blindfolded, towards the bull. The animal, now the picture of fury, and foaming at the mouth, dashes at the horse, burying his horns in his belly and throwing him to the ground, the rider underneath, but not before a long strip of flesh has been cut out of the bull's back by the spiked pole.

Shouts of applause greet the bull. The chulos rush to the man's rescue. The bull brings his horns again and again on the fallen horse, and is about to gore the man when a chulo dashes a red scarf in his eyes, and he turns from his victim

after the chulo. Another piccadore advances, the same scene occurs, only, that this time the bull jumps over the barrier after the chulo, and dashes after him down the narrow passage. A door is thrown across the passage, and he finds himself again in the arena only to meet with other piccadores.

We have seen six horses killed by one bull, and have beheld with a shudder, horses trailing their entrails advance towards him.

Then a bandillero comes forward; he advances close to the bull's horns, calling out, "Toro, toro." The bull is exhausted with his efforts, the blood is flowing fast from the wounds inflicted by the piccadores. His head, mouth, and chest are covered with foam; his legs tremble, but indomitable he meets this new attack with a determined rush.

The spectator thinks it impossible the bandillero can escape, but the latter nimbly jumps aside, and plants a dart close to his

spine; another rush and another dart; so a third and fourth. This is evidently the crowning agony.

The bull throws his head first to one side and then to the other of his neck to pluck out the tormentors, and, failing this, bellows and paws the ground.

Then steps forward the "Premier Spada." In his left hand he holds a red flag, in his right a long straight sword. He waves the flag in the bull's eyes. The courageous beast, game to the last, darts at the flag.

On the instant the Spada raises his right arm, and with one thrust buries the blade to the hilt in his body, close to the shoulder, piercing the heart, and the brave animal vomits a pool of blood and falls dead.

Then vociferous cheers greet the skilful swordsman, and presents are thrown to him by fair hands from the boxes.

But should the bull, as is sometimes the case, instead of rushing at the flag, rush at the man, then death is almost certain.

A small surgery is attached to every amphitheatre, and a surgeon and priest are in attendance.

We were shown at Madrid the bed in the surgery where Pepète, a celebrated Spada, died, a short time before, from the injuries inflicted by a bull which rushed at him instead of at the flag.

A bull bait in England was the signal for letting loose the worst passions of the then labouring men of Lancashire. They combined the best and worst qualities of human nature. Capable of extraordinary exertion, holding danger in contempt, impatient of restraint, and given to indulge in debasing orgies, they nevertheless possessed generous feelings of the highest order, and would sacrifice their own life to save that of others.

Thus, when a mill took fire in the day time when all the hands were at work, spreading with frightful rapidity and preventing the escape of many, a man was

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seen writhing in the flames, held to the ground by a fallen timber.

Three colliers saw the poor wretch, and the tears rolled down their cheeks as they witnessed his torments. Vowing that they would save him or die, they rushed to his rescue and perished in the flames.

The "Dog and Badger," a low sporting tavern about half a mile from the Yews, was the rendezvous for those who took an interest in the coming bull bait. The house was full of low, brutal-looking men, each having a bull-dog. What with the shouts and oaths of the men, and the snarling of the dogs at each other, the place was a perfect pandemonium.

Bets were laid on the performances of the dogs, and the hubbub was increased by the arrival of the bull, when the barks and howls of the dogs became frightful to listen to. He was led into a large field some little distance from the tavern, and was tethered by a very strong rope to

an iron spike driven firmly into the ground.

There was an immense concourse of people, for it was about the last bull bait, as Government had determined to put down the practice, and Parliament was asked to pass an Act to that effect.

Will, drawing Lawrie after him, had made a short cut over divers fences to the scene of action, thus escaping the mob on its way from the "Dog and Badger."

The public stood round at some distance, whilst the men with their dogs stood within the ring. Dog after dog was thrown into the air. Some were caught by their owners in their fall, others were not and were gored by the bull in his fury.

At last one dog pinned him by the nose, and, throwing his head from side to side to shake him off, the bull bellowed with pain and fury. He succeeded after some time in casting off the dog, and then made a tremendous rush to free himself from torture.

He dashed headlong into the crowd, tossing and goring men, women, and children.

Will grasped Lawrie's hand tighter, and hurried away as fast as he could. Fortunately he spied an opening at the bottom of the fence. He thrust Lawrie head first through it, and followed himself, just in time to escape the horns of the bull which was close upon them.

Woods had escaped into the same field and joined them, pale and trembling. He begged and implored them not to bring in his name, as he would to a certainty lose his place.

The sport being thus brought to an abrupt conclusion, the roughs reassembled at the "Dog and Badger," their vicious propensities roused to the highest pitch by their disappointment at the termination of the sports and the strong ale of the landlord.

It was not long before two of the men agreed to wrestle for some beer. One was a particularly thick-set muscular man, but rather short; the other was taller but still

very muscular. They stepped into the road, and the taller man threw the other twice out of three times. The short man insisted that they were not fair falls, and offered to fight—" ups and downs." The latter man, a quiet peaceable-looking fellow, who had been urged to wrestle by the other men, wanted to give up the bet and avoid further contest. He was taunted, however, as being a coward, both by his opponent and those who stood round, and reluctantly agreed to fight it out. They adjourned to a field close to. The short man succeeded in getting the tall one down, and put his fingers to his throat to strangle him. The tall one, by a desperate effort, threw him on to his back, and held him there, not striking or choking him. The crowd shouted, " Throttle him or he'll kill thee " (he was notorious as an unscrupulous fighter).

The tears rolled down the tall man's face, he was unwilling to do it; but the

cries being repeated, and feeling that his opponent was likely to get uppermost, he placed his fingers to his throat and tightened them with all his force.

The short man's face went black, nothing but the whites of his eyes could be seen, he stretched out his arms and legs, and gave a quiver.

The bystanders shouted, "He's dead," and every one rushed from the field leaving him lying there.

The landlord of the tavern brought a shutter, placed him on it, carried him to his house, and laid him at full length on a table, and sent word to the police office at Lumechester.

At ten o'clock at night, as the landlord and his family were about to go to bed, they heard the door of the room in which lay the dead man open—they shook with fear—their own door was then opened, and the supposed dead man asked for a pint of ale and some bread and cheese.

CHAPTER IV.

PECKING AND PLUNDERING.

Mr. Godwin, relieved of his anxieties, resumed his proper character of the pleasant genial gentleman, as fond of innocent merriment as a child, and Mrs. Robert was delighted at the change, for she could now talk to him without fear that the greater portion that she said would fall upon ears closed to all but one topic.

When Mr. Godwin appeared at the breakfast table rather late, Mr. Robert having breakfasted and gone to his business, and began to condemn himself for indulging in bed, his sister stopped him saying, "My dear brother, if we were to believe all that you say against yourself you would be a shocking sensualist instead of being, as you really are, one of the most abstemious and hard-working men living—so say no more

in your own disparagement but make a good breakfast whilst I talk to you."

This was the opportunity which Mrs. Robert had looked forward to, and she began, "My dear brother, now you are here, and perhaps may never come again and find me," and her eyes filled with tears, but she recovered herself without letting her brother, then engaged in breaking the shell of an egg, see her emotion, "there are two or three things I want to talk to you about."

Mr. Godwin put down the spoon and looked mournfully at his sister, and rather surprised, for he had concluded in his own mind from what she said on the evening of his arrival, that his own and Mr. Robert's fears had been exaggerated, and took her hand with affection and said,—

"My dear sister, God grant that I may often come here again and find you happy in the midst of your children and blessed with your husband's love. You spoke so

cheerfully the other evening that I hoped all gloomy forebodings had vanished."

"Well, my dear brother," said Mrs. Robert, smiling, "that may be so, but there are probabilities which we cannot overlook. My nerves have been much shaken by late events, and all that I want to say to you is simply by way of precaution, and so I will proceed, and you must not look mournful or else I can't go on. In case, Erasmus, it should please the Almighty to take me away, I know that I can rely upon my dear husband doing everything he can for his family; but it will be necessary that he should seek assistance in house-keeping matters, of which he is, as you know, entirely ignorant, as every household arrangement has been left entirely in my hands; and much, very much, depends upon the kind of person whom he selects to take charge of his house. Such a thing as his marrying again has never been the subject of a thought in either of our minds,

I am sure, but if he does marry, I am satisfied that it will not be soon, in deference to my memory. I am most anxious about Lawrie, for he is a very high-spirited boy, and remarkably clever and intelligent. He can be guided by kindness, but harshness would ruin him; and if he fell under the control of some harsh or inconsiderate woman, it would spoil his character, if it didn't break his heart. I know that I can trust him implicitly to the care of you and your dear wife, but I don't like to mention this to Robert, for he is very fond of having the boy about him, and he might think that I ought not to suggest his being deprived of any comfort under his affliction. But shortly after the change he may find so much has to be attended to that he never thought of before, that he may readily listen to any offer from you to take charge of the boy for a time, and if he was thrown amongst a number of school

boys, his thoughts might be diverted from his sorrow for me, and his love of study be encouraged by the example of others."

Mr. Godwin, still hoping that all this was merely precaution, readily promised his sister that he would carry out her wishes, and then Mrs. Robert changed the conversation, and they chatted about their early days.

The breakfast things had only just been removed when Miss Vandaleur came in, and tapping Mr. Godwin playfully on the shoulder with her fan, told him that she didn't know whether she would speak to him at all, seeing that he preferred shutting himself up with those horrid pens and ink, instead of seeing his cousin only twice removed, and that it showed how he had forgotten the well-known gallantry of his countrymen, and taken up with English manners.

This was a home thrust which Mr. Godwin hastened to rebut by paying Miss

Vandaleur what she called "very fine compliments," and she told him that he beat Mr. Henry in that line, and that she would write to his wife and tell her not to let him go from home by himself, and in playful banter they passed an hour, at the end of which Miss Vandaleur declared that he ought to be grateful to her for bringing him out in his true character of an Irish gentleman.

Just about dinner time Mrs. Smyley came to make sure of seeing Mr. Godwin, and accepted Mrs. Robert's invitation to sit down with them to that meal. Miss Vandaleur also remained with a tacit understanding that peace was to reign between her and Mrs. Smyley. Now the latter had a great regard for Mr. Godwin, and had even formed a plan that if, in her life-time, the mantle fell from the shoulders of Dr. Smyley, she, as patroness of the living, would induce Mr. Godwin to leave the ranks of the Independents and join the Established

Church, and present him to the vacancy. So that, although he was wholly unconscious of the pending dignity, he had a peculiar interest in her eyes as the successor of Dr. Smyley, and the inheritor of all his popularity. Had Mr. Godwin known of these designs of Mrs. Smyley he would have regarded them with amazement. What! he, a stout defender of the Independent principles, to sacrifice his conscience for a position in the Church of England, to surrender his opinions for which he had undergone the reproaches and threats of his landlord for voting against him at the election of members for Parliament for Severnworth. No! not even the offer of a bishopric would induce him to turn his coat.

Blest is the religionist, and happy the politician, who descends to the grave possessed of life-long convictions. The world cannot, however strong may be the reasons and pure the motives, reconcile itself to great changes of opinion. It is apt to argue

that if the first conviction be not right the second may be wrong, and that the mind which can arrive at opposite conclusions from the same data never can have been thoroughly in earnest in that belief. "If the cant of patriotism be odious, the recant of patriotism is still more so," was the telling retort of a Whig statesman to a leading member of the House of Commons at one time notorious for his extreme Liberal views, and who, late in life, as the advocate of high Conservatism, taunted his former allies with the "cant of patriotism." Perhaps it is best for the good of the world that this should be so. It is better that injustice should be done to even the best intentioned public men, than that fickleness and instability should attain to honour. As it is, those who abandon the principles for which, in the fulness of manhood, they fought, take rank with those who sign the capitulations of armies and the surrender of fortresses.

Mr. Godwin's views, being unknown to Mrs. Smyley, who could not conceive it possible that anyone would object to receive Dr. Smyley's mantle, her greeting of Mr. Godwin was always very cordial; and, on the other hand, his admiration and respect for Dr. Smyley were unbounded, for he found in him the nearest approach to the Independent model within the ranks of the Established Church.

The meeting of Mr. Godwin and Mrs. Smyley so soon after the delivery of the sermon at Barport could not pass off without its being made the subject of conversation. Mrs. Smyley listened with delight to the enthusiasm of Mr. Godwin as he developed the nineteen heads, and the mind of the former instinctively wandered into print. Why should not Mr. Godwin, she observed, print and publish so great a sermon? It would be a testimonial, she thought within herself, of his fitness for the mantle of Dr. Smyley, and a tribute to her own judgment. She rapidly ran over the chances

of "its paying," and expressed her opinion that, there having been three thousand persons present, one in every five would hasten to receive the treasure, and thus ensure its success in a money point of view.

"My dear Mrs. Smyley," interposed Mrs. Robert, "pray do not start my brother upon more brain work. We are all delighted to see him rest himself a little and talk with such interesting people as Miss Vandaleur and myself about all kinds of trifles, and here you want to put him into the printer's hands at once; so I shall take him in charge so long as he stays in Lumechester, and prevent him doing anything of the kind, and when he leaves here I know that his wife won't let him do it."

Then Miss Vandaleur came to Mrs. Robert's aid, and was not sorry to join in the discomfiture of Mrs. Smyley, observing that cousins, only second removed, had some right to be considered, and that in Ireland it was generally thought that per-

sons who wrote books could do nothing else, and that she did not wish that any of her relations should be so badly thought of.

As this observation appeared to Mrs. Smyley to be indirectly aimed at the sermons and hymns, she felt bound to take some notice of it, and said that some people liked well enough to read books, though they could not write them, if they pandered to their imaginations, to which Miss Vandaleur was about to make a pungent return, when she saw Mrs. Robert look so distressed that she suppressed her indignation, inwardly resolving to pay off Mrs. Smyley the next time they met. Mrs. Smyley had certainly touched upon a sore point, for Miss Vandaleur delighted in reading a love tale, and deeply sympathised with Pamela in all her joys and fears as pictured by Richardson in his long and interesting novel.

Mrs. Robert was not sorry when Mrs. Smyley proposed to carry off Mr. Godwin

to call upon Dr. Smyley, whose engagements prevented him acompanying Mrs. Smyley; and Miss Vandaleur availed herself of the opportunity of Mrs. Smyley's back being turned to express to him a hope that his spirits would not suffer from passing an afternoon under such depressing influence. Miss Vandaleur then left, for she had that morning got into the midst of a most exciting love story, and was anxious to arrive at the denouement.

Mrs. Robert was reminded by Mrs. Smyley's visit that she held her husband's cheque for £4 10s. to repay Mr. Henry the amount he had paid for the two packets of sermons and hymns, and she accordingly wrote as follows.

The Close, Monday.

My Dear Cousin,

My last was a hurried letter merely thanking you very much for your great kindness to Lawrie, and which I

cannot refrain from repeating. The visit did my boy so much good, and he never ceases talking about his pets at the farm, and how much he should like to see them again.

I wrote to you on the evening of our arrival at Breezemere.

You may possibly hear that, owing to the want of skill of the bathing-woman, the little fellow, on taking his bath the next day, stood a chance of being drowned; and in trying to save him I nearly met with an accident myself. Thanks to a kind Providence only a fright to both was the result.

My dear brother is now staying with us. He is such a good kind creature, as I scarcely need tell you, and it is a great comfort to me to have him with me for a few days.

I had almost forgotten to execute a little commission for Robert. He finds that the children at the Sunday School

are rather short of Dr. Smyley's sermons and hymns, which appear likely to be soon out of print, and he would feel so much obliged to you if you could spare the copies Mrs. Smyley handed to you when you called there. Thinking that you will scarcely require them, as they are not in use I believe in any church except Dr. Smyley's, I enclose a cheque for £4 10s. and when convenient Joseph can forward the books by the carrier.

My dear husband unites with me in very affectionate regards to you, and we shall be glad at all times to receive a letter with good accounts of your health.

I remain, my dear cousin,
Your sincerely attached relative,
ADA DE NOEL.

On receipt of the letter Mr. Henry summoned Joseph to a conference. "Joseph he said, "Lawrie has been nearly drowned, and Doctor Smyley's sermons and hymns have had such a run upon them that they

are becoming very scarce and valuable books, and Mr. Robert wants them, and perhaps you could spare your copies," looking at Joseph as if he were asking a great favour.

"Spare them," said Joseph, "of course I can, Sir, and only too—"

Here Mr. Henry stopped Joseph as if he feared some observation in depreciation of the books was about to come out.

"That will do, Joseph," said Mr. Henry, "I am so glad you can spare them, it will be such a convenience to my cousin."

"But what about Master Lawrie?" said Joseph, somewhat impatiently.

"I will read you the letter, Joseph, but that does not say much," replied Mr. Henry.

"Poor Mrs. Robert," said Joseph mournfully, "I fear it will be bad times with her."

Then, and not till then, did the truth flash upon Mr. Henry's mind that the

accident might produce grave results in Mrs. Robert's then state, and the thought struck him that his gentle cousin might succumb under the ordeal that awaited her; and when Joseph saw his look of agony he blamed hmself for having suggested the idea to him, and he did all he could to soothe his master.

After a little while he requested Joseph to bring him his writing-desk and penned the following letter,

"Whicham, Wednesday.

"My Dear Cousin,

"I received your very kind letter and the enclosed cheque, and am only too glad to have it in my power to moderate the inconvenience arising from the great sale of Dr. Smyley's sermons and hymns, a fact which speaks volumes in their favour, and I shall never speak disparagingly again of publications which are evidently so prized by the public."

Considering that Joseph was so much mixed

up in the transaction he here called him in and read what he had written, and was greatly surprised that Joseph's face assumed a particularly broad grin for which he could not account. He then resumed,

"Having disposed of business let me, my dear cousin, say how very distressed I was to learn the danger in which your precious life has been placed. What must have been the feelings of your worthy husband and such of his children as are old enough to appreciate the case, I can, in some degree, judge by my own, for I feel that had your life been sacrificed my own would not have been worth having, so much kindness, so much consideration, of which I own myself unworthy, have I received at your hands. I thank a kind Providence for His goodness, and pray that He may shelter you under His wing. Pray present my affectionate regards to your good husband, and give my Godson a kiss

from me, his danger has affected me in a degree only second to your own.

Believe me, my dear cousin, to be,

With high esteem,

Your attached relative,

HENRY DE NOEL."

Mr. Godwin returned from a very long call on Dr. Smyley, more and more imbued with his worth and that of his excellent spouse. The doctor communicated to him his arrangements for attending to the spiritual, and, when necessary, the temporal interests of his large flock, and so much did Mr. Godwin feel his own shortcomings in face of the apostolic efforts of Dr. Smyley, that he made his sister laugh at a very awful description of them which he gave her, and she announced her intention to keep him apart from the Smyleys during the remainder of his stay; and she planned pleasant drives for him and, had sisterly chats, and took care that the *cuisine* should not suffer in comparison with that

in his own house, and so made time pass happily until the end of the week, beyond which he could not extend his visit. Packing up the sermons himself, whilst Mr. Robert's servant packed his valise, Mr. Godwin bade farewell to his sister and her husband, all showing much emotion, and betook himself with great misgivings to the dangers of the coach.

The guard's bugle sounded merrily as the coach left Lumechester with four spanking bays, Mr. Godwin himself being the principal object on the coach as he waved his arms to and fro to warn the people out of the way, and remonstrated with the daring urchins who gratuitously put themselves in danger.

The day after Mr. Godwin's departure, Mrs. Robert and the servants alone being in the house, a sudden hurry and bustle arose, messengers were sent here and there, and shortly aftewards a prim little woman and her box were admitted,

and both were sent instantly upstairs. She was shortly followed by Mr. Robert, and then the doctor's knock was heard, and he was ushered into the drawing-room where sat Mr. Robert looking pale and anxious. The doctor, with a smile, took his hand and said, "Dont be anxious, my dear Sir, it will all turn out well no doubt." "Pray God that it may," said Mr. Robert fervently. The door opened, and the faithful old nurse, dropping a curtsey, said to the doctor "If you please, Sir, you are wanted upstairs." Mr. Robert sat below trembling and with his hands clasped. After the lapse of some time the old nurse again opened the door, and, not waiting to curtsey, said, in joyful accents, "It's all over, Sir, a fine girl, and mistress going on nicely." "Thank God," said Mr. Robert, and a quiet joy crept through his frame as he felt that the dear partner of his life was still left to him.

CHAPTER V.

A GREAT SURPRISE.

When the little community at Saint Peter's saw the lower ladder to Ebenezer's house standing at its usual spot on the road, they concluded that he had returned from Crosdale, and one of the deacons, not seeing him about the village, nor any signs of Basford and his wife, mounted the ladder and entered the house and found it empty, and signs indicating that it had been left in a hurry. He communicated with his brother deacon, and together they made enquiries if Basford and his wife had been seen to leave the village, but could not learn anything of them. Many were the surmises as to why the Basfords had disappeared. As guests of Ebenezer they were entitled to consideration, and their conduct during their stay had gained respect. It

was clear, however, that the mystery must remain unsolved until the return of Ebenezer. He reached home about six o'clock in the evening, and nothing could exceed his surprise when he found his guests gone and not a scrap of writing to indicate why or whither. He was too convinced of the honesty and uprightness of Basford and his wife to think for one moment that either of them had done anything which could lead them from motives of shame to take a sudden departure; and he felt sure that it could not arise from discontent with their position as guests, as everything had been done to conduce to their comfort. Only on the eve of his departure for Crosdale they had expressed the great pleasure which their visit had afforded them.

Could it be that Basford's politics had suddenly brought him into trouble some how? This seemed the only reasonable interpretation to put upon their departure.

Ebenezer, however, had too much upon his mind in connection with village matters to stand ruminating on the subject, so after preparing with his own hands a simple meal, he produced from his pocket and from a capacious writing-desk a quantity of papers relating to the financial part of the festival, and was shortly busied in a profound examination of their contents, and his face lighted up with a smile of satisfaction as he arrived at the result. "That will do," he muttered, "five hundred and twenty-one pounds, three shillings, and sixpence, not a bad result for the little place. There will be two hundred pounds to put the chapel in repair and paint it, and a hundred pounds for medicines and the Patients' Home, and a hundred pounds for the road between here and the valley, and one hundred and twenty-one pounds odd for other expenses."

Then Ebenezer made out a clear balance-sheet to put before the deacons. Having

finished this he had divers accounts to make out as between himself and the villagers who had entrusted him with money for purchases, or for whom he had sold goods at Crosdale, and then, tired with a long day's work, he retired to rest, feeling lonely, however, at the absence of Basford and his wife, whose stay had been a source of much comfort to him.

The following day the deacons came to his house, and he laid the festival accounts before them, and insisted upon their quite understanding them, and this done, they all three signed them and forthwith nailed them on the chapel door for public inspection.

Then Ebenezer went round to the abodes of those for whom he had transacted business, and took the utmost pains to make them understand what he had done for them.

It was not until after the lapse of four days that Ebenezer learnt why Mr. and Mrs.

Basford had departed. He then received a letter from Basford, as follows:—

Lumechester Gaol, Saturday

Dear Friend Ebenezer Thorneycroft,

I write to thee in great tribulation of spirit. The Lord hath laid his hand heavily upon me, and now, as thou wilt see by the above address, I am a prisoner, and my gaolers say that I am to be tried shortly and if found guilty may be transported for life. God forbid that my days should end thus, but if it be His will that such should be my sad fate I am resigned.

Thou would'st think it strange to find thy house empty, and not a scrap of writing to inform thee why. The farming man who brought a horse for sale and flung the guardsman was a runner from here disguised, and he knocked at our door in the middle of the night, and made us get up with him at once, as he was afraid of the people setting on him. He treated us kindly and did not put handcuffs on.

Poor Mary is broken-hearted. She left me at the prison gate, and is by herself at Drawbridge. If thou would'st write a word of comfort to her I should take it kind of thee.

I cannot tell how much I have to thank thee for thy kindness to her and me at Saint Peter's. We were so happy and thought we should be let alone, and Mary talked me over to giving up agitation, and taking a little farm. But God's will be done.

I am, thy sincere friend,

RICHARD BASFORD.

To Mr. E. Thorneycroft.

Ebenezer was much affected whilst reading the letter. Big tears had evidently dropped upon it whilst Basford wrote it, leaving deep stains; and the hand that guided the pen had trembled so as to render some of the words almost illegible.

Ebenezer's first feelings were of deep commiseration with his friend, his second was that of indignation that his sovereign

rights at Saint Peter's in the Rocks had been outraged by the arrest of Basford, and in his own house too. There was a tacit understanding between the authorities and Ebenezer that any law-breaker within his district should, at the request of the former, be delivered up to them.

Ebenezer at once replied to Basford's letter thus,—

Saint Peter's, Thursday.

Dear Richard Basford,

Thy letter gave me great grief and surprise. I did hope that thy troubles were ended. Maybe that an All Wise Providence is afflicting thée for the best, and that thou wilt come purified out of the fire.

If E. Thorneycroft can do thee any service he will; and if thou art in need of money for thy defence, or anything else, write at once and thou shalt have it.

I will write to thy wife a word of comfort, and if thou wouldst like her to stay

with me, and take charge of my house until thy trial is over, so that she may not be alone, thou canst let her know that I shall be glad to receive her and give her brotherly consolation.

It may be that a good word from a poor man like me, testifying to thy character as a God-fearing man, would not be of use to thee, but if thou thinkest it would I will attend at thy trial and speak in thy favour. I shall be glad to hear from thee and I am,

Thy faithful friend,

E. THORNEYCROFT.

To Mr. R. Basford.

The invasion of Ebenezer's territories touched the honour and dignity of the little community too much to be allowed to drop, and accordingly he summoned his deacons to a solemn conference.

"Ye see," he said, "that for thirty years and more, indeed ever since Saint Peter's sprang up into a village, we have lived

separate from the outside world, making our own laws for ourselves, and leaving others to make laws for themselves. We've always paid the King his due without having tax-gatherers amongst us, and no constable has ever been here till they took Basford, and if they had only let me know that they wanted him I should have given him up, even if he had been my son. If they once begin to interfere with us there will be no stopping it, and we must stand firm on our rights, come what may, and blood may be shed."

In all this the deacons agreed, and to their question, what should be done, Ebenezer continued,—

"Now it's of no use writing to those folks at Lumechester; they'll maybe only write and tell us that we are out of the world and don't know the law, and so make things worse. I've been turning it over, and as I hear that our lord-lieutenant is a just man, I think it best I should go

over to his place and put the matter before him, and ask him not to allow us to be put upon. A great man like him can help us, and will feel for us more than some little man that nobody cares about."

In this suggestion the deacons fully concurred, and it was arranged that, as soon as possible, Ebenezer should go over to his lordship's seat, about thirty miles off, and lay the case before him.

Ebenezer was much concerned to hear on his return that the artist had become much worse, and was not expected to live. As soon as the conference was over, he went to his cottage, and found death stamped on his face. Rachel was seated by his side, holding his thin white hand in hers, and Ephraim Norman stood by, his manly frame forming a strong contrast to that of the artist. He had just come in to see if the patient could bear removing to his usual seat in the sunshine outside the cottage door, where he could look

at the wildflowers in the crevices of the rocks, but the artist shook his head. Ebenezer fully expected all this, and seeing that medicine could do nothing for the invalid, sat by his bed side and administered consolation with such discretion that, whilst the dying man felt it gladden his heart, it saved those feelings of human nature which lead us to shrink from death.

He then left the cottage, but returned late in the evening, and found that the artist had just breathed his last. Ephraim Norman was still there. He had won the heart of the artist by his kindness and attentions, and when he was no more he stayed about the cottage to attend to anything in which he could assist his widow.

People said what a change had come over Ephraim, and how willing he was to work, and what pains he took to keep his cottage in order, and how he shewed the delicate attentions of a brother to Rachel, and how evident it was that

she was grateful to him for his kindness to her husband and herself. Nearly all the grown-up population of Saint Peter's attended the funeral in the pretty little burial ground attached to the village, and Ephraim Norman was one of the bearers.

Three days after the funeral one of the villagers who had been at Crosdale and knew Ephraim's wife's relations brought him word that his wife was dead. She had taken to habits of intemperance, and left her father's home and had gone to Lumechester, and in a fit of frenzy had flung herself into the river and was taken out lifeless. The news soon spread through the village, and knowing matrons said that Ephraim and Rachel would make a match of it.

At this point of our story it may be well to consider, *sub silentio*, whether under any circumstances it is allowable to indulge in even a moderate amount of joy at such an event as was then announced to Ephraim Norman. We merely suggest the

question, discreetly reserving our own opinion. We have it, we grieve to say, on good authority that the anniversary of a wife's death has been regularly celebrated with much rejoicing. It is on record in one of our courts that a retired tailor was wont to indulge in such unpardonable demonstrations. That upon those occasions he would gather around him a number of choice spirits at his villa on the banks of the Thames, two miles below Erith, and by the aid of cannon, fire-works, and bonfires, proclaim to the world that he was a free man. But mark ye, Nemesis overtook him on one of these occasions. Arnold Salt, who had retired from the navy on the strength of a good legacy, and bought a small yacht, and, with a brother tar and a boy as ship's crew, used to spend his time between Erith and the mouth of the Thames, was attracted by the firing. He hoisted all sail to reach the scene of action, and putting his ship

"in stays" calmly, but with surprise, regarded the rejoicings on the tailor's lawn.

The tailor, seeing that his proceedings were watched by the yacht, considered it a *casus belli*, and loading his guns to the muzzle with buttons and other odds and ends, opened fire upon her and cut her sails about. Boiling over with wrath the tars returned the fire from a small brass cannon, knocking the tailor's chimney-pots to pieces. The fight waxed hot and furious. Getting into their bit of a cock-boat armed to the teeth the tars stormed the tailor's entrenchments, and drove in the enemy, capturing the tailor himself, whom they bound hand and foot, and taking him on board the yacht put him into the hold and sailed with him to the coast of Thanet. There they put him ashore, whence, as a penalty for his sins, he had to make his way home eighty miles on foot without a shilling in his pocket. Who shall say after this that wrong done to woman's memory goes un-

avenged, even though committed by only a fractional part of a man?

On the Sunday after the arrival of Ebenezer a service was held at the little chapel to render thanks for the success of the Festival, and the bountiful result to the villagers. Ebenezer was of opinion, and adopted it both in principle and practice, that constant contact with religious ceremonies elevated the thoughts and raised man to a higher level. He knew nothing of classical history, but by the unerring instinct of a noble mind arrived at the same conclusion as the ancient Romans. The historian says: "Among the principles of the Roman policy none seems to have taken a deeper root than the fear of the Gods, and a veneration for religion. If we inquire into the nature of the religion professed by the Romans we find that it ran much upon the answers of oracles, divinations, soothsayings, sacrifices, and innumerable other ceremonies that argue

more of superstition than any just knowledge of the Deity. But absurd as this religion may appear it had, nevertheless, a wonderful influence upon the minds of men, and was often made use of with success to inspire courage in battles and dangers. It is well known that all their military expeditions were preceded by the auguries and the auspices, and according to the auguries which were offered on these occasions did the people judge of their issue. Hence their wisest and best generals, by a strict regard to these observances, and accommodating the ceremonies of religion to their own designs, generally found means to give a favourable turn to the omens, which greatly contributed to exalt the courage of their troops and made them face the enemy with confidence. On the contrary, it is observed that where the usual forms were neglected, and generals affected to act in contempt of the auspices, they seldom succeeded in their designs."

With light hearts the congregation assembled that day, and it was with a face expressive of contentment and thankfulness, that Ebenezer made a homely and telling address to his hearers.

As before observed, Ebenezer had a taste for music, but it was sacred music he loved, and he had succeeded in forming a small but effective choir in his chapel; and in his selection of hymns he generally chose something which told of the might of Israel, and the grand doings of its Prophets.

At the conclusion of his address he gave out the following hymn, in which the congregation heartily joined, and the blended voices sounded in rich music from the chapel, and echoed through the rocks:—

Jerusalem put on thy strength,
  Arouse thee as of old,
Summon thy tribes from India's heat
  And Iceland's piercing cold;
Proclaim to all the world thy sons
  No longer bend the knee,
Thou hast changed the Moslem Crescent
  For the banner of the free.

Arab and Turk no more shall press
The sacred ground once trod
By Naz'reths lowly minded Son.
Thine own incarnate God;
His glorious Temple raised on high
To way-worn Jew shall be
A token of his covenant
With the children of the free.

Thy vine-clad hills, thy pastures green,
Thy valleys rich with corn,
No more by the scorching breath
Of the desert simoon torn;
Thine harp attuned to sacred song,
Not hung on willow tree,
Shall praise the God of battles
In the city of the free.

Turn to thy sacred history,
Writ by thy God's command,
Read how the armed Assyrian slept
When he stretched forth his hand.
Then Judah, be not faint of heart,
Jerusalem shall be
A refuge for thy scattered tribes,
The city of the free.

The pure copious and never failing stream which dashed through the village and brought health to the inhabitants was celebrated through the county, and upon

it the commissioners who held the reins of local government in Crosdale cast an envious eye as being admirably adapted for the use of that town. The determined spirit of the mountaineers was pretty well known, and it was with some misgivings that the commissioners approached the consideration of the question. The prominent members of that body urged that water was not the property of any man, that it descended from the heavens and belonged to those who wanted it and had the power to take it, and that Saint Peter's was the abode of a parcel of isolated fanatics, whose opposition in Parliament would crumble to pieces at the first contact with the might of Crosdale. By such arguments the Commissioners were led to resolve that they would ask Parliament to give them the supply of Saint Peter's for their own use. The first intimation the Saint Peter's people received of the resolution was the appearance of a number of

men with poles and other appliances for preparing plans and sections of the intended works. Ebenezer was engaged in his usual ministrations about the village when he met a number of "foreigners," who, on his enquiry what they wanted, informed him that they were going to take measurements and make plans for waterworks for Crosdale, for which purpose they intended to take the village stream. Ebenezer's indignation was unbounded, but he restrained his temper, and said quietly,—"My lads, if you think that Saint Peter's people will let you rob them of their water you are altogether mistaken, and I bid you begone instantly."

The presence of these men had roused the village, and they were soon surrounded by the able-bodied men of the place, who, not knowing the cause, but seeing Ebenezer's determined look, came to assist him. The men demurred to leaving, and on a signal from Ebenezer were

instantly thrust headlong from the village, leaving their instruments behind them. Ebenezer then explained to the villagers the why and wherefore, and long rounds of applause followed what he said. But the Crosdale people were too clever for the simple-minded people of Saint Peter's. The nights were moonlight, and with that aid they took all the measurements they needed for their plans, whilst slumber closed the eyes of the mountaineers. This was an additional reason why Ebenezer should see the lord-lieutenant, and rather earlier than intended he started on his journey.

Before doing so he wrote the following letter to Mrs. Basford:

Saint Peter's, Wednesday.

Dear Mary Basford,

I received from thy husband the sad news of his being a prisoner, and I greatly sympathise with thee in thy sorrow. It is bad enough to be imprisoned for crime,

but far worse to be imprisoned for conscience sake, which thy husband no doubt is. Thou art a right minded woman, and will bear thy affliction as becomes thee, and I hope and trust that the Almighty will help thee to do so. I have written thy husband that if it would take away thy loneliness I should be glad to see thee here, until thou art required on his trial, and I will do all in my power to console thee under thy affliction.

I am,

Thy sincere friend,

E. THORNEYCROFT.

To Mrs. Mary Basford.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BUXTON WATERS.

Mr. Henry felt lonely in his bachelor quarters at Whicham, and he had not wholly recovered from the effects of his accident, and thought a change would do him good, and after much reflection and some consultation with Joseph, he arrived at the conclusion that he would go to Buxton and drink the waters.

It was the time of the year when county families betook themselves to that charming retreat among the Derbyshire hills, the men to follow the grouse over the moors, the women to flirt and gossip, and all to drink the waters. The day of Hotel Companies Limited had not arrived, but the accommodation afforded by the old-established hostelries, conducted in the clean and comfortable style of bygone days, was not de-

spised by those who left their own elegant mansions and took up their quarters there. The principal hotel was a large rambling building, called the "Regent," which had been originally a moderate-sized private residence, but, after being converted into an hotel, had been so altered and added to that it required some days' stay before a guest could master its labyrinths. There was a large and lofty dining-room, plainly. but substantially furnished, and there was a large and lofty drawing-room, furnished plainly, but with taste, with windows to the ground opening upon a well-kept lawn and flower-garden. There were a few, a very few, private sitting-rooms, and these were usually occupied by the highest class of visitors, but all sat down *table d'hôte*, to breakfast, lunch, and dinner; and a friendly tone pervaded the guests, who, though not all of equal rank, were as a rule gentlefolk, and mostly known to each other by meeting in county society and the hunting

field. Generally a peer, two or three baronets and M.P.'s, a fair sprinkling of clergymen and officers of the army and navy, and country squires with their families, constituted the party at the "Regent."

Conversation at dinner was not allowed to flag, and went usually in a better groove than is commonly found at a mixed table. Politics, county matters, hunting stories, college tales, and the result of the day's sport on the moors, all had their turn.

The male guest who had been longest there took the head of the table. He was generally a retired officer, who arrived soon in the season, and only left when nearly all the guests had gone, and his experience of society made him an excellent president, and also a judicious referee in case of any little dispute arising on questions of etiquette or cards, (the latter being by far the most prolific,) and his decision was held final. Moreover, he was the mouth-piece of the visitors to represent

to the landlord any grievance of which they had to complain. It generally rested with him to determine the status of an unknown new comer. If his experienced eye expressed approval his status was secured, otherwise not. He was regarded by watchful mammas as a safe depository of their hopes and fears. If young Detrimental was too attentive to the susceptible young lady fresh from school, it was he who was entrusted with the ungracious task of hinting that his attentions were not agreeable. But if the youth was a good match, then he became the recipient of divers compliments, observations not intended of course to be repeated to the object of them.

The table appointments were all good. The bed-rooms, though not large, were exquisitely clean, and many a coroneted head sank pleasurably upon the pillow, full of the fragrance from hills covered with gorse and ling.

Many of the guests were attended by their

own servants, and these added to those of the Hotel made a goodly show at dinner, and the meal was well served. The head waiter of the establishment had grown grey in the service of the proprietor. He was admirably fitted for his post, and knew the affairs of most of the families who visited the Hotel, and being treated by them with some consideration, he took pride in imitating the manners of the nobility. He was very particular in his dress, and carried himself in a somewhat lofty way, and was rather grandiloquent, and thereby acquired the soubriquet of "Lord Jones." He represented a class, now extinct, who looked to the guest, and not to the landlord for renumeration, and being thus dependent on the guest for his fee, and on the landlord for the post, he considered himself the protector of both interests. Who that recollects hotels in England when this system prevailed can doubt that its abolition has been a great mistake.

The British innkeeper had the laugh at John Bull, when letters to the *Times* wrote in the compulsory fee for attendance without succeeding in writing out the voluntary fee, and the result is that Mr. and Mrs. Bull, in their tour through the Lake District, or the charming scenery of Wales or Scotland, find to their dismay that the charge of two shillings a day each for attendance is a reality, and the note on the bill, "No fees allowed to servants," is a sham, and that the pleasure of their trip is destroyed by a number of harpies waylaying them on their departure from the hotel, and scowling them into giving an equal amount in "gratuities." But the doubling of the attendance fees is not the only evil. The present hotel servants can bear no comparison with the respectable well-dressed servants of former times.

Mr. Henry, having resolved to go to Buxton, and take up his quarters at the "Regent," where he had stayed before,

the thought struck him "Would Miss Vandaleur like to go?" He had heard her say that she should like to drink the waters, but that she had no one to go with. When he argued the pros and cons in his own mind, he generally ended by leaving himself in the same state of uncertainty as when he commenced. His difficulties were by no means diminished when he consulted Joseph. He put it to the latter: "Would it be quite proper?" Joseph elevated his eye-brows, and seemed so completely staggered by the proposal that he could say nothing intelligible on the subject. In this dilemma Mr. Henry determined to write to Mrs. Robert for her advice, and after many unsuccessful attempts he indited the following letter:

Whicham, Monday.

My Dear Cousin,

It is with much diffidence that I beg leave to ask your opinion on rather a delicate matter. I have determined to

drink the waters at Buxton, and shall leave towards the end of this week, taking my carriage and posting. I happened to overhear Miss Vandaleur say to you that she wished much to go to Buxton, but had no one to go with, and did not like going by herself. Do you think there would be anything improper or indelicate in my asking Miss Vandaleur if she would do me the honour to accompany me. If you think there would not be, and if Miss Vandaleur has still a wish to drink the waters, would you do me the very great favour of asking her the question. As the season is passing away, and the time for preparation is short, I send this by Joseph, and have desired him, if it be quite convenient, to wait for an answer. With my kind regards to Mr. Robert,

I remain, my dear cousin,

Your sincerely devoted relative,

HENRY DE NOEL.

To Mrs. Robert de Noel.

On the expectation of an order for post-horses for the first stage on the road to Buxton, the landlord of the "Spotted Deer" lent Joseph his private cob, and the latter started for the Close. He put up the nag at the Royal, and, withstanding the solicitations of the ostler to join him in a flagon of ale, made his way straight to his destination.

To his amazement, on lifting his hand to the knocker, he saw it was covered with a white glove, and, understanding the mysterious character of the emblem, he walked round to the servants' entrance.

"What is it?" said Joseph, rushing in *media res.*

"What is what?" said the cook, who opened the door.

"You know what," said Joseph.

The cook looked at him with mute astonishment.

"The glove, you know," shouted Joseph, indignant at her stupidity.

"Oh," said the cook, "that's three days ago, it's a girl, and Master has just written a letter to your Master to tell him, but it has'nt gone yet."

Mr. Robert's servant coming in, Joseph went with him into his sanctum-sanctorum.

Now Joseph was quite overweighted with the communication contained in the letter, the import of which he knew. Closing the door, he looked with a comical expression of face at the other, and then, giving him a gentle punch in the ribs with the end of his right thumb, he pointed with the fore finger of the other hand in the direction of Miss Vandaleur's apartments, accompanying the action with a click of his tongue.

Mr. Henry's servant was by no means pleased with the levity with which he considered Joseph was treating the late event in the family, and observed, coolly, "Thank goodness, she is doing well."

"Aye," said Joseph, whose mind was

full of his errand, "and she'll do better still if she takes care."

"Well," said the other, "she can't do better than she is doing."

"What!" said Joseph, "not do better when she gets down there and drinks the waters?"

"I don't think, Joseph," said the other, gravely, "you've been drinking water—what's that you've got? A letter for Mistress I see, I'll take it to Master at once," and with that left him, and went to the library and handed the letter to Mr. Robert, and said that Joseph was waiting below for an answer.

Mr. Robert opened the letter, and a smile passed over his face, and he went to Mrs. Robert's room to read it to her.

Weak as she was, Mrs. Robert could not help laughing heartily and said, "By all means tell her to go, a nice change for her. I think she has just come in."

Now Miss Vandaleur was greatly inter-

ested in the event which had just taken place. She had some time before taken the measurement of the knocker, and had cut up a white kid glove, and, with the aid of some white ribbon, had made quite an ornamental announcement ready for immediate use. On learning that the event had occurred she hastened to the house and with her own hands affixed the token. She had been allowed an early inspection of the new arrival, and pronounced it the very image of its mother, and had presented the nurse with a crown for the privilege. She paid two visits daily, and had come in that afternoon, in compliance with Mrs. Robert's wish, to see her for a few minutes for the first time after the event.

"Ah, my dear Sir," said she, to Mr. Robert, as he entered the drawing-room, "What a good husband you are to leave all that business of yours and come to see your wife. When my father, who was staying with a friend in Wicklow, received

a letter to say that my mother was confined of her ninth child, he ran out of the house like mad, and finding his friend's horse saddled and bridled at the door for a day's hunting, he jumped upon his back, and rode him hard to Merrion-square, and his friend followed him with a constable, and would'nt let him go till he showed him the baby."

Mr. Robert smiled, then producing Mr. Henry's letter, and not being a diplomatist, he simply said that he had received a letter from Mr. Henry and handed it to her.

The mention of Mr. Henry's name created quite a flutter in the little lady's breast, but when the broad fact disclosed itself that he had actually proposed to take her to Buxton, she opened her fan, and dexterously interposed it between her face and Mr. Robert, leaving only her eyes visible.

"But what," said she, "does my cousin say to it?"

"My wife not only sees no harm in it,

but thinks that you should not hesitate to go, and that it will be a nice change for you, You should say "Yes" or "No" at once, as Joseph is below, waiting to take back a reply."

"I'll speak to my cousin for one moment if you will allow me," said Miss Vandaleur in a nice way.

"By all means," said Mr. Robert, "she expects you, and if you will tap at the door, nurse will admit you."

Not even the important intelligence communicated by Mr. Robert could drown the natural feeling which arose in Miss Vandaleur's breast when she saw one of her own sex, and one so united by ties of blood and affection, for the first time after that fearful ordeal.

Miss Vandaleur stole silently to the bedside and imprinted an affectionate kiss on the pale cheek, whilst tears of joy trickled down her eyes, the injurious effects of which were for the moment forgotten.

Mrs. Robert returned the kiss as sincerely as it was given, for she greatly loved her cousin, whose generous qualities she fully appreciated.

"Robert," said the latter, "has read me Mr. Henry's letter. There can be no possible objection to your going to Buxton with him. Your ages, as well as your relationship by marriage, quite justify it. Go and enjoy yourself, I'm sure it will do you good, so give me a kiss, for I can't talk much. And ask Robert to reply to Mr. Henry."

Mr. Robert sent for Joseph to come to the library and ascertained what Mr. Henry's arrangements were, and settled that Mr. Henry should come with the carriage to fetch Miss Vandaleur, and gave him the two letters for Mr. Henry. When Joseph went to the servants'-hall he was able to clear up his conduct to the satisfaction of Mr. Robert's servant, who had not forgotten Joseph's lapse from the paths of sobriety when he was at Lumechester before;

and the little observation of the former regarding his abstinence from water had its effect, and led Joseph to decline all the blandishments of the ostler when he returned to the "Royal," to proceed homewards.

"Only two days to get ready," sighed Miss Vandaleur, but had it been ten days Miss Vandaleur would have sighed none the less. It is forbidden to the uninitiated to pry into the why and wherefore so much time is demanded by the fair part of creation to "get ready." If Smith were, in a tourist frenzy, to declare that he should cross the Atlantic, starting the following day, he would be ready to the minute. But alas? poor Mrs. Smith, she would appeal feelingly to Smith that her things had not come from the laundress, that she had not a dress to go in, and that it was impossible. Impossible? Why fair lady? If you knew that you must start the following day, is there not all London ready to receive Smith's cheque? And is

the anticipatory investment of Smith's capital in what is at all times useful, assuming, of course, that Smith has a fair balance at his banker's, money thrown away? Did not a great General say that he was ready to start for India with a towel, a toothbrush, and a piece of soap? My dear Mrs. Smith, take example from your sisters on the other side of the Atlantic. Know that in the land of high-pressure engines and flashes of lightning, they start on a trip of a couple of thousand miles, with one black silk dress, and some etceteras in a morocco hand-bag.

You will say, perhaps, "What nonsense, haven't you seen their Saratoga trunks?" Of course I have, and have always avoided walking behind them when carried upstairs; but those mean Parisian fashons, and changes three times a day, and are exceptions."

Miss Vandaleur was equal to the occasion, and, when the day came, stepped into Mr. Henry's carriage, with the consciousness,

that her make-up was *comme il faut.*

They changed horses at Barport, where Mr. Henry got out to stretch his legs, and became the object of considerable curiosity on the part of the public. After a time they began to ascend the Derbyshire hills, and Miss Vandaleur compared them to the Wicklow Range, and declared that she felt herself in Ireland again. The roads were good, though the ascents and descents were too steep for rapid travelling, and it was late in the evening when they drove up to the "Regent."

Mr. Henry asked for a private sitting-room, as they were too tired to go into the public room.

The white-headed landlord and his comely wife received them at the door, and recognized Mr. Henry at once, though it was many years since he had been there, and on his saying. "My cousin Miss Vandaleur," the landlady made a low curtsey, and offered to show her to her room,

whilst the landlord himself, preceded by a servant carrying wax candles, shewed Mr. Henry to the sitting-room, and with a respectful bow, said that he would have the honour of waiting upon him in the morning, and left him to give further orders to the respectable-looking waiter.

Shortly Miss Vandaleur joined him, and was loud in her praises of the nice bed-room, with a lovely view of the mountains, allotted to her. Mr. Henry had ordered a dinner-tea, and plentifully it was served. Trout taken that morning from the adjacent stream, grouse kept to the point of perfection, and eggs just taken from the nest, formed a repast that compensated for the want of any meal since they left Lumechester.

Miss Vandaleur had taken especial pains with her complexion before starting, and was too experienced to neglect the renovating touch after her arrival, and Mr. Henry complimented her upon the wonderful effect of the mountain air already.

Miss Vandaleur was too good a general to allow *ennui* to put its finger on time, so she proposed a game at picquet, in which interesting occupation they were immersed when a gentle knock was heard at the door.

"Come in," said Mr. Henry, and thereupon Lord Jones presented himself.

"I beg pardon, Sir," said he, "but I could not allow the evening to descend into the shades of night without wishing a former patron a happy return to the old place."

"Thank you, Jones," said Mr. Henry, "I am pleased to find a faithful servant appreciated by his master, as must be your case."

"Sir," replied Jones, "we do try, in our humble sphere, to tempt to these bowers the good and the beautiful," making a low bow to Miss Vandaleur.

"Well," said Mr. Henry, laughing, "I think Jones that my cousin Miss Vandaleur

appreciates your compliments," for Miss Vandaleur had had immediate recourse to her fan, "and that we shall get on very well under your care, and here is half-a sovereign to assure you of my pleasure in seeing you again."

There was a certain meaning in all Lord Jones's fine phrases. He was quite aware that soft sawder costs nothing. He was much of the same opinion as Jack Stevenson, on the Brighton Road, who was wont to observe "Ciwility costs nothing, I always carries a hat-full of ciwility about with me. I gives a handful here, and a handful there, and it does good all round." Lord Jones accepted the gift with becoming humility and expressions of gratitude, and Mr. Henry found that the douceur *in presenti* secured little delicacies which the douceur *in futuro* would not have commanded. Then Mr. Henry made some enquiry as to the visitors.

"Who is President?" asked Mr. Henry.

"Sir Charles Veysey," replied Jones, "a thorough gentleman, one of the Duke's heroes."

"And the others?" enquired Mr. Henry.

"Very nice people," said Jones, "barring one set from Drawbridge (but that is in confidence), wife very voluminous lady; there are two rectors, and one vicar, and their wives and daughters—Church first, Sir, you know. Then there is a peer with his family, two baronets, three officers from the Regiment at Lumechester, and the rest are county people, except a lady and gentleman, who come from the south, and are very nice and sing beautifully together, and the gentleman is much older than his wife, but they are so attached to each other, and although we were all surprised at first, we don't think anything of the difference in age now."

"Well Jones," said Mr. Henry, "we think that we shall be very comfortable, but we would rather not join the general table

until to-morrow evening. We are both tired. Give direction to the chamber-maid to take Miss Vandaleur's breakfast into her bed-room to-morrow morning, and let my servant bring mine, and we will lunch in this room." Jones promised attention, and, making a low bow, disappeared.

Sir Charles Veysey took the president's chair at the dinner-table, five minutes before the gong sounded at six o'clock. Jones stood behind his chair, and, as the guests assembled, Sir Charles said,—

"New arrivals, Jones?—nice people, hey?"

"Very, Sir Charles," replied Jones, "Cheshire squire, very portentous gentleman, and his cousin, lady from the Isle of Emeralds, if I may judge by a slight brogue."

"Well, I wish, Jones, she would find some on my Irish estates, for they pay their rents very badly at present," said Sir Charles.

On the following afternoon Joseph announced "General Sir Charles Veysey."

Mr. Henry rose and said, "I am happy to receive so distinguished a soldier and gentleman." Mr. Henry only did his visitor justice. He had served through the Peninsular campaign from the first, and fought at Waterloo, and had received as many wounds as he had medals and clasps. Sir Charles was barely more than half the age of Mr. Henry, and was still remarkably handsome, and as he looked at the fine frame and honest face of the old gentleman, he grasped his hand cordially and instinctively liked him. Taking a seat, the conversation began and ended merrily. Mr. Henry had a good deal to say about the Radicalism of Lumechester, and told the story of the soldier. Miss Vandaleur discovered that Sir Charles was an Irishman by birth, and knew some of her relations, and Sir Charles had something to say, but with the modesty of a true soldier, of his experience in war. Wishing to put the new visitors

at their ease, he arranged that they should sit on his right at dinner, the usual occupants dining out, and before retiring informed them of this, and said that he would give himself the pleasure of accompanying them into the dining-room. Some few minutes before the gong sounded Sir Charles came into their room and, giving his arm to Miss Vandaleur, placed her at his right and Mr. Henry next to her. Miss Vandaleur's cup of happiness was full to overflowing.

CHAPTER VII.

A SCENE.

Under the presidency of the accomplished soldier and gentleman, the hour and a half passed off pleasantly to the visitors. Those who had their own servants standing behind their chairs, told them to attend to those sitting near who came without, and the vigilant eye of the landlord supervised all the arrangements.

Miss Vandaleur was not too old to appreciate the fine manly face and figure, and exquisite taste and tact which distinguished Sir Charles Veysey. Entering first into conversation with Miss Vandaleur and Mr. Henry, as the latest arrivals, he then turned to the other guests.

"Well Frank," he said, to the son of the Rector of Rainforth, seated to the

left of his father, his mother being on the right, "what sport on the moors this morning?"

"Birds awfully wild, bagged only a brace," replied the youth, whose rosy cheeks told of the fresh morning mountain air.

"I'm afraid, Frank," said Sir Charles, "you had'nt a fair chance, for I met my old comrade Lord Castleton this morning, and he told me that he starts to-morrow, early, over the same shooting, and as Castleton is very liberal with his guineas if he hits, but not if he does'nt, that knowing old gamekeeper has led you off the birds, and Castleton will go home to dinner at the Duke's with a full bag."

The young man's face became crimson, for he had dropped a guinea into the open palm of the gamekeeper at the end of the day's sport.

Then, addressing a Derbyshire baronet, Sir Charles asked how his game preserves

had turned out, and congratulated him upon having so intelligent and honest a head-keeper.

Then catching the eye of a nice girl of seventeen, the daughter of another Derbyshire magnate, who had been doing a bit of "jumping" with her brother, to test the quality of a thorough-bred that her father had given to her, enquired how she liked him?

"Oh," said the girl, "he's such a clever little fellow. I'll ride a steeple-chase against Tom for a sovereign."

"And I'll back you," said Sir Charles, "for whether Tom or anybody else taught you he has given you a very good seat."

"Oh it wasn't Tom," said the girl, "it was cousin Harry who is at Oxford," and the slight blush that came on the girl's cheek was not unnoticed by Sir Charles who observed, "Those cousins make the best riding-masters in the world," and a slight smile just showed his fine white

teeth under his dark moustache. The girl had dropped her face towards her plate, but a sly side glance at Sir Charles, whose eyes met hers, said in unmistakable terms "it's too bad of you."

"Any news, Mr. Brown, from the cotton district?" said Sir Charles, "but before you answer the question pray replenish Mrs. Brown's glass that I may have the honour of taking wine with her." Mrs. Brown went into a flurry off-hand, became very red, and made a great nod to Sir Charles, strangely contrasting with the polished ease with which the latter slightly inclined his head.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown were the Drawbridge people referred to by Lord Jones. She was, as the latter justly observed, "very voluminous" and had railway enterprise been as rife in those days as it is now she would no doubt have had a broad-gauge line laid down around her with convenient stopping places, and refreshment rooms. Mr.

Brown made a comparatively feeble attempt to follow her stout proportions, but their son and daughter, who sat at their sides, bade fair to follow her footsteps.

Mrs. Brown's fat hand was loaded with fine diamonds. Mr. Brown's little finger on the left hand was made conspicuous by a large brilliant.

The junior Browns also wore brilliants. The big footman standing behind Mrs. Brown, in the glories of a blue and scarlet livery, and large brass buttons with the arms of the Brown family, outdid in gorgeous appearance all the rest of the servants put together, but it was observed that the latter often tittered at the mistakes made by that functionary.

"Sir Charles," said Mr. Brown, "let me send you my Madeira to try it, it is out of my own cellars, and has made the round of the Cape."

"John," said Mr. Brown to his footman, "take the Madeira to Sir Charles." John

seized the decanter with trembling hand, for he stood in awful dread of Sir Charles's clever servant, who stood behind his chair, and moreover had no notion of being thrust suddenly before the public. His hands and knees shook, and catching his foot against the leg of Miss Vandaleur's chair, he stumbled forward and tilted some of the wine down Sir Charles's cravat. Although the application was rather liberal Sir Charles moved not a muscle of his face, but simply said to his servant, "Stevens, you assist me," and took wine with Mr. Brown as if nothing had happened.

Turning to Mr, Henry, he said, "Pray pardon me if I ask have you hurt your left arm, as I see you use it with difficulty. I have myself suffered so much from a disabled arm that I pity any one who does so."

Mr. Henry replied, "Yes I have, I was thrown down by that Lumechester mob in August, and have not quite recovered from a broken clavicle."

"I once broke mine in hunting and know what it is," said Sir Charles.

"I hope you went to a good man for it is not every doctor who understands such a case."

"Oh yes," said Mr. Henry, "I went to a very good man, a Doctor Naylor."

"Oh," said Mr. Brown, "that's the Bloomfield-road doctor, a quack," and gave a supercilious look at Mr. Henry which was wholly lost on the latter, but was perceived by Miss Vandaleur who said a little sharply, "And a mighty fine doctor he is too."

"No doubt," returned Mr. Brown, "for some people, I send my horses to him."

Sir Charles bit his lip, and pushed the glass of Madeira from him, and then said, kindly, to Mr. Henry, "You appear at all events to have been well treated, for I was months before I could use my arm as you do." Then, turning to Miss Vandaleur, he said in a low tone, "I fear, Miss Vandaleur, we must, in this world, take people as we find them."

Looking towards the middle of the table he said, "Mr. Fraser, have you and your wife had one of your usual long walks this morning, veritable lovers' walks?" The gentleman to whom he spoke was a tall, well-dressed man, with very broad shoulders, a good merry face, and large intelligent forehead, and much older than his wife who sat by his side, and whose merry ringing laugh was frequently heard during the dinner, as she and her husband exchanged jokes and repartees with each other and those near them. She was a beautiful girl, a brunette, with dark eyes and hair, a finely chiselled face, and good tall figure.

She was the daughter of a peer of the highest rank, who did not at first approve of the match, but, finally consented on the understanding that his name should be concealed, the difference in his own and Mr. Fraser's station being so great. A common love of music had united the two, and the study of the best composers

a daily occupation, and tightened the bond of affection. Each evening they enlivened the drawing-room by selections from Mozart, Mendelssohn, Handel, Haydn, Bellini, and other classical authors. Mr. Fraser's fine baritone voice, and his wife's splendid soprano, together with her skilful accompaniment on the piano, produced an effect which those who heard it could not drive from their memory. She was the second wife, his previous marriage had been a most unhappy one, and, taking the conduct of her medical man as pungently described by the judge of the Probate Court, in which he had figured, all that Mr. Henry said in condemnation of doctors received additional corroboration. At last Mr. Fraser was set free, and he found in the affection and charms of his second wife some compensation for the misery he had gone through in his earlier days.

When the ladies rose to leave the dining-room Sir Charles opened the door

for them, and it gave him the opportunity of saying a kind word to any lady whom he had not noticed at dinner.

"Ah! Mrs. Folliot," he said to the last, who had stayed behind to have a word with the General, taking her hand, "have you seen your last heroine to the hymeneal altar?" The honourable Mrs. Folliot it was well known in the house was a most voracious novel reader, and took shelter with her book in the secluded parts of the grounds, but it was somewhat ill-naturedly said that she usually chose the General's beat, who, expert as he was in vidette duty, was frequently surprised by the foe in the shape of Mrs. Folliot.

Mrs. Folliot was the widow of the Honourable Frederick Folliot, third son of the Earl of Borrowdale, usually called "Fred Folliot." Of his accomplished father it was said that if he was not coming from the money-lenders he was sure to be going there, and the report was that

his study was papered with the acceptances which, in the course of a long life, he had put his hand to. Fred Folliot got a commission in the army, but his regiment served almost everywhere but on the battlefield, and he was thereby denied the chance of showing the military skill which doubtless lay latent within him. On arriving at home on leave from the West Indies, he was suddenly struck with the charms of the governess to his younger sisters, and, without seeking parental permission, eloped with her, and got married at Gretna Green. The Earl was furious, and announced his intention never to see him again, but promised him an allowance of £200 a year, which was punctually paid in paper, but as Fred Folliot's tastes were expensive, and as the paper could only be cashed at a great discount, he was everlastingly engaged in "raising the wind" as he called it; and, finding the various accesses to credit closed, he sold his commission and lived upon the

proceeds and his allowance until he lost his life by an accident in the hunting field. It has been said that the will of more than one banker has been made with the view of keeping up the credit of the firm, and Fred Folliot's will was made on the principle that it was advisable to keep up the honour of the family. He left his wife his freehold estates in the west of Ireland and in the north of Scotland for life, with a legacy of £2,000, and his furniture, plate, horses, and carriages, and after the death of his wife the estates were devised to his dear father the Earl of Borrowdale, who was made executor and trustee along with his wife. The Earl, though he would not see his son during his life, followed his remains to the grave, and lunched with his widow afterwards at the apartments in Moon-street, Piccadilly. The widow produced the will, and requested the Earl to read it, which he did with a face expressive of considerable astonishment,

and then laid it down, observing that the paper looked all right but he was afraid it would not be readily discounted. No doubt the estates were conveniently situated in point of distance, and the £2,000 was a sum which could be imagined, and that he would take care that a slight mention of the very satisfactory nature of the will should appear in the London papers, and that until he could find time to prove the will the allowance he had made to his son should be continued to the widow. Mrs. Folliot found a thousand pounds still unexpended, and, on the faith of that and the allowance, determined not to abate one iota of her position as the daughter-in-law of an Earl. She took a small house near Kensington Gardens, and furnished it inexpensively, but with taste ; and on the strength of her connexion and the will she held her own.

She had heard that in the autumn the "Regent" at Buxton was a desirable place of resort, and was easily accessible by a

coach from London to the north, and she started there, accompanied by her maid. The maid filled various posts of importance in Mrs. Folliot's establishment—she was housekeeper, lady's maid, housemaid, and cook, and Mrs. Folliot could, in conversation with her friends, refer to her four servants without, she considered, any sacrifice of veracity.

The maid's name was Somers, and she had represented herself to Mrs. Folliot as the widow of a respectable tradesman in the North of England who had died and left her unprovided for ; and Mrs. Folliot, knowing that it would be difficult to find a person to fill such various offices, engaged her on the recommendation of a family who had brought her as a temporary servant to London.

The first time that Joseph made his appearance in the servants'-hall he was greeted, greatly to his surprise, by a voice he knew, "Why Joseph, well if ever!" It was Mrs. Somers, who, rising from the

table, held out her hand. "To think," she said, "that we should meet here so sudden." Mrs. Somers was the daughter of an old servant who had been in the service of Mr. Robert and his father thirty-five years, and died leaving his only child and a clock in a big stand-up mahogany case to the care of Mr. Robert. For a short time she remained in Mr. Robert's service, but believing the vows of a journeyman baker, she accepted him for better and for worse. Mary's temper was not the sweetest in the world, and probably her reliance upon the protectorate of Mr. Robert made her careless as to controlling it. However, the marriage was not a happy one, the husband took to drink, and was continually threatening to sell the mahogany clock, and when matters got to the worst, and the sale of the clock seemed imminent, Mary hired a donkey-cart, and, with the clock on the top, made her appearance at Mr. Robert's.

The periodical appearance of the clock was as regular as that of a comet, but at infinitely shorter intervals, and it could be calculated to a nicety that the clock would revolve in its orbit twice a year. The announcement to Mr. Robert by his servant, "If you please, Sir, Mary is here with her clock," invariably caused his countenance to fall, for it meant tears, probably hysterics, a long story about her husband's iniquities, the charge of the clock for a period varying from a week to a month—accordingly as the husband shewed repentance—and her taking up her quarters at the Close for a day or two, or such shorter or longer time as elapsed before the baker made his appearance to take her home. It was, therefore, no little relief to Mr. Robert when the baker died, and his widow accompanied a family to London; and as the clock had become a standing joke at the Close, and could no longer be admitted there, she was

obliged to leave it in charge of a friend, who calmed her anxiety about it by reporting from time to time its state and condition.

It was a law laid down by Mrs. Folliot that Mrs. Somers should in all cases make her acquainted with all such circumstances as could be from time to time collected in reference to the relatives, friends, and acquaintances of the former, and Somers became a good hand at this work after receiving a few lessons from Mrs. Folliot in the art of creeping stealthily about the house, listening at doors, peeping through key-holes, and the latter thereby acquired much useful information, which considerably enlarged her knowledge of human nature.

On the ladies reaching the drawing-room Miss Vandaleur took her seat as far as possible from Mrs. Brown, and her face shewed that she had not recovered from the annoyance caused by the gaucherie of Mr. Brown. Mrs. Fraser perceived this, and crossing the room seated herself by her

side, and she became again the light-hearted Irishwoman, and chatted with Mrs. Fraser, and, finding how fond the latter was of music, spoke of Moore's melodies, which Mrs. Fraser admitted were very pretty ballads; but that, after studying classical music, she could not bring herself to play and sing ballads, however beautiful. A rector's wife then asked Mrs. Fraser to sing, and she sang in exquisite tone and tune, "He was despised," from the "Messiah."

"If that won't bring the men up I don't know what will," said Miss Vandaleur, and immediately the majority of the gentlemen came from the dining-room.

Sir Charles Veysey was not, as usual, among the first comers. He went to his bed-room from the dining table and rang for his servant. "Stevens," he said, "never let that vari-coloured clown come near me again. Give me another cravat, and sponge that Madeira off my coat—the fellow nearly drowned me."

"Had you not better put on your surtout, Sir Charles?" said Stevens.

"Oh no!" replied Sir Charles, "we must put on a dress coat even if saturated by Madeira. By the bye, Stevens, I was quite hurt at the way that man Brown spoke of the doctor who attended that fine old gentleman. I don't care whether quack or not he's a clever fellow, and I'll go to him the next time I get damaged; and Stevens, without bringing in my name, you may tell his servant that the company seemed hurt at his master's rudeness, and it may get to the man's ears and, perhaps, stop his tongue in future," and with that Sir Charles descended to the drawing-room. The notes from the "Messiah" had ceased, but Sir Charles, going direct to the piano, thanked Mrs. Fraser, and hoped she would sing again, and induce her husband to accompany her in a duet. Mr. Fraser loved the grand music of Handel, Haydn, and, Mendelssohn, and when, in compliance with

his wife's call of "Ned," he came to her side, and she asked what he would like to sing, he replied, "Graceful Consort," looking affectionately in her face at the same time.

Taking up this master-piece of Haydn, she played the introduction, striking the chords and thus doubling the sound, and Mr. Fraser took up the first solo, and she the second, and then their voices blended in the first duet. Sir Charles's expressive face bespoke his admiration of the melody, and on the conclusion of the piece he said that it took him in imagination to Italy, and the lovely music of the Basilica.

Miss Vandaleur, unobserved, had watched the Brown party narrowly, and arrived at the conclusion that they were vulgar people, and it required no great discrimination to see this. Mrs. Brown ejaculated when the duet was finished, "How pretty!" and her husband endorsed her opinion by saying "It's better than our chapel, isn't it, Nell?"

Sir Charles then, in his kindly way, tried to

form a party or two at whist, and, in hopes that closer contact might heal the wound inflicted by Mr. Brown's remark about the doctor, he seated Mr. and Mrs. Brown at a table, and then, walking down the room, asked Miss Vandaleur if she would take a hand with them. "No, I thank you," replied Miss Vandaleur. An observation from Mrs. Brown, though made in a whisper, came clear across the room. It was, "We don't want any low Irish."

Miss Vandaleur rose from her seat, and going to Mr. Henry, who was engaged in conversation with the wife of a baronet, said, in a clear firm voice, free from all asperity, "Mr. Henry, be so kind as to give me your arm; we must leave this room."

Mr. Henry, wholly unconscious of the cause of the request, gave Miss Vandaleur his arm, and the latter, moving with a smile to Sir Charles, left the room with Mr. Henry.

"Let us go, Cousin," she said, "to the sitting-room we had, and I will explain all."

In silence they strode the long passage, and meeting a waiter told him to shew them to the room and light the wax candles. "Cousin," said Miss Vandaleur, now trembling violently, "those Browns have insulted us," and she explained to the unconscious Mr. Henry what had taken place at dinner, and in the drawing-room. Mr. Henry was indignant at an insult being offered to a lady under his charge, and ringing the bell ordered Joseph to bring his writing-desk instantly. Sitting down he penned the following letter:—

Regent Hotel, Friday.

Sir,—I have just been made aware of the rudeness and want of good breeding shewn, first by your own observation at the dinner in reference to my medical attendant, and, secondly, by your wife's observation aimed at my Cousin referring to "low Irish." You are not only responsible for your own conduct, but you are responsible for your wife's, and I demand an instant and written apology from you for conduct

unworthy of a gentleman. You will be so good as to send a reply to me in No. 15.

I am, Sir, Your obedt. Servt.,

HENRY DE NOEL.

When he came to address it he was at a loss for the christian name, and, furious as he was at the double insult, he would not send the note until he had ascertained it, deeming it derogatory to a gentleman of any position to address him without giving the christian name. Joseph was, therefore, ordered to obtain it from Mr. Brown's servant, and, having done so, he addressed it in a firm hand, "To John Brown Esq."

Mrs. Brown had been indulging in a quiet chuckle at having driven "those Irish out of the room," and, moreover, was delighted at the good hand which had just been dealt to her, when Joseph entered the room, and holding a salver with a note upon it to Mr. Brown, waited as if expecting a reply. Mr. Brown's

countenance fell, and the redness partially left his cheeks, and then, turning to Joseph, said, "I'll send a reply."

"What's the matter my dear?" said Mrs. Brown, laying down the cards."

"Why my dear, its—" Here he paused and then continued, "We'd better go to our room for a few minutes," and they rose, asking their opponents to excuse their playing out the rubber, and left the room with their children. The appearance of Joseph, coupled with Mr. Brown's evident discomposure, was noticed in the room, and each asked the other, "What's the matter?" Sir Charles expected all this, and quietly said, "When anyone insults a gentleman, as Mr. de Noel evidently is, he must be prepared for the consequences," and did his best to prevent the incident from marring the pleasure of the other visitors.

Mr. Brown, owing to a natural want of delicacy, was not in the least aware of the rudeness of his own observation about

the Bloomfield-road doctor, but he was quite aware that Mrs. Brown's remark about "low Irish" was unfortunate, to say the least of it, and told her so. The woman, with the cowardice of a vulgar mind, trembled at the effect of her rudeness, and the possibility of herself, her husband, and children, being ordered to leave the house, loomed before her, and in her agony she suggested to her husband to send for Sir Charles Veysey and ask his advice.

Mr. Brown accordingly rang for his servant, and feeling that, after the blunder at dinner, he could not trust him to convey his request to Sir Charles, he desired him to ask Stevens if he would be so kind as to come to their room. Stevens knew by this time from Joseph what had taken place, and was not at all unwilling to witness the distress of the Brown family, for whom he had the most intense contempt. He entered the room in a manner expressive of this feeling.

Mr. Brown, addressing him as "Mr. Stevens," said that he should feel greatly obliged if he would take his card to Sir Charles Veysey in the drawing-room, and wrote in pencil, "Mr. Brown would be greatly obliged if Sir Charles Veysey would speak to him in room 20."

Stevens took the card to Sir Charles, who said, "my compliments, and I will be there directly." "Sir Charles's compliments and will be here directly," said Stevens, stiffly, on his return.

In another moment, Sir Charles's knock was heard at the door which Mr. Brown opened. Sir Charles commenced by saying, "It is a great pity anything should occur to disturb a pleasant party, and I must tell you both very candidly that I think your conduct inexcusable. Supposing that Mr. de Noel did employ a quack doctor, it was not for you Sir, to say in the hearing of all the table, 'he's a quack doctor and attends my horses.' And when I wanted to restore good feeling

and asked Miss Vandaleur to take a hand at whist with you, it was not for you, Madam, to whisper so that all could hear it, a remark about 'low Irish.' There are high and low Irish, just as there are high and low English (and as he said this he looked them steadily in the face,) but Miss Vandaleur is certainly not low Irish, for I know many of her connections, and they are highly respectable. And as to that I am an Irishman myself, and am proud of my country."

Poor Mrs Brown wished the earth might swallow her up, and Mr. Brown, who, at heart, was not a bad fellow, felt heartily ashamed of himself and his wife too, and he had so much of the stirling worth of the Lancashire character in his composition, that he in the amplest terms expressed his great sorrow and contrition, "That being so, matters are simplified," said Sir Charles, "and I suppose that you will not object to say what you have just said to Mr. de Noel and Miss Vandaleur personally."

"No," said Mr. Brown, quite subdued.

Sir Charles rang the bell, "Send my servant here. Stevens," he said, "go to Mr. de Noel's room, No. 15, with my compliments, and say that if he would be so kind as to receive me I will step to his room."

"Mr. de Noel's compliments, sir, and he will be most happy to see you," said Stevens on his return.

Sir Charles, on entering the room, took Miss Vandaleur's right hand in his right, and Mr. Henry's in his left. "I can't tell you how much I have been grieved at the rude conduct of those people this evening. Pray attribute it to their ignorance. I come with a message from them that they desire to beg the pardon of you both, and let me beg of you to receive it as a sufficient satisfaction. I have already an intimation from the landlord that, unless they satisfy you, they will be ordered out of the house to-morrow morning, and though that ought not to weigh in the ques-

tion it will throw a damper on all the party."

"Sir Charles, I forgive them with all my heart," said Miss Vandaleur, "and I will go with you and tell them so," taking Sir Charles's arm, followed by Mr. Henry, who exclaimed, "We are all miserable sinners, no doubt about it, and need forgiveness."

All three then proceeded to the Brown's room, and Mrs. Brown, in tears, begged forgiveness, and Brown himself could scarcely speak for emotion, as Mr. Henry kindly placed his hand on his shoulder and said, "I forgive you, as I hope to be forgiven myself."

Sir Charles then offered Miss Vandaleur his arm, Mrs. Brown took Mr. Henry's, and Mr. Brown, whose face had resumed its happy look, followed with his children, and they all entered the drawing-room and the *entente cordiale* was restored. Why should not a husband be equally as liable for his wife's insults as he is for his wife's debts, when he stands by and does not express his dissent?

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ENTENTE CORDIALE.

When the visitors assembled at the breakfast table the morning after the *désagrément* the countenances of the Browns bore traces of mental disquietude, and their manner indicated humiliation of spirit.

Mr. Henry and Miss Vandaleur entered the room after Mr. and Mrs. Brown and family were seated, and at once went to them and shook hands cordially, a mark of consideration fully appreciated by the visitors, and especially by Sir Charles Veysey, who, on rising from his chair, extended his hand to each, and placed Miss Vandaleur on his right. Sir Charles insisted that they both should share with him his coffee made by Stevens in a silver French percolator on a principle now well known, but then new in England, which formed part of his luggage

wherever he travelled. He declared all coffee made in the English mode simply execrable.

Is it not strange that to this day the decoctions served at breakfast in hotels in England are, owing to false economy on the one hand, and carelessness on the other, repulsive mixtures. As Mr. Henry and Miss Vandaleur took their seats, Stevens placed before each a table napkin, an appendage as necessary to a breakfast table as to a dinner table, but then seldom placed before a guest at an hotel, and a supply of which, with many other articles of linen, Stevens always packed up with the luggage.

Many years ago we were crossng the Atlantic in a steamer belonging to a leading company, and finding no table napkins at any meal, we fee'd our steward to supply us with new towels as substitutes. Mentioning our grievance to an American gentleman who sat next to us, and who, accustomed to such an appendage, felt the want of a napkin equally with ourselves, he said that it had

often been represented to the managing director, an irascible gentleman from the north of the Tweed, and that his reply was, "What the de'il do the people want wi' table-napkins—I dinna use a table napkin."

Then came the arrangements for the morning upon which the visitors exchanged views. Sir Charles challenged the young lady with the Oxford cousin to do a little jumping with him. Mr. and Mrs. Brown came to Mr. Henry and his cousin, and begged they would take seats in their carriage for a drive to Haddon Hall, that choice specimen of architecture of the feudal times, which they gladly accepted ; and in addition to the charming scenery and the interesting relic, they had the further gratification of partaking of a champagne luncheon spread on the green sward near the ruins ; and Mr. Brown so pressed the choice Epernay from his own cellars upon Miss Vandaleur that her imagination was heightened thereby, and she told such amusing Irish stories that

Mr. Brown was nearly choked with laughter, and Mrs Brown's fat sides shook again. The result might have been serious to Mr. Brown had not Mr. Henry taken advantage of a slight pause, and got him on the Battle of Dettingen and George the II. riding with his sword drawn along the front of his army, and imitating his Majesty's waving his sword by a flourish of his gold-headed cane, he smote off the heads of two bottles of champagne, but committed no further slaughter. So, after a very pleasant day, the party returned the best of friends, and Mr. Henry put his arm through the General's, and promenaded the terrace for half an hour before dinner, and told him that he was indebted to him for a charming excursion, and that he considered Mr. Brown a very worthy kind of man, and his wife a good hearted creature. Even the callous heart of the experienced Stevens felt kindly towards the Browns after they had made the *amende honorable*, and

he gave their gorgeous footman a few hints about waiting at table, which greatly improved his performances.

The party in the drawing-room was merrier than usual; the storm-cloud had burst and only sunshine remained. Sir. Charles stood near the chair of his fair companion of the morning, sipping the cup of coffee brought by Stevens, and making her laugh by saying that he should like to change places with Cousin Harry. Mr. Henry and Miss Vandaleur, and Mr. and Mrs Brown, sat down to a rubber at whist, Mr. Henry taking Mrs. Brown as partner; and Miss Vandaleur was mightily pleased that Mr. Brown had to hand her ten shillings out of his well-filled purse, as the losings of Mrs. Brown; and Mr. and Mrs. Fraser sang selections from "Sonnambula," and the three young fellows from the barracks at Lumechester fluttered round Mrs. Fraser and went as near to a decided flirtation with her as they thought they could do with

safety, for they saw that Mr. Fraser was not a man to be trifled with, and that his broad shoulders and evident determination might give any one *un mauvais quart d'heure*; and Mrs. Fraser evidently enjoyed their admiration, and laughed heartily at their little compliments. Mr. Fraser witnessed it all with the look of a man who likes to see delicate attentions paid to his wife, and feels that he can place implicit confidence in her.

The next day being Sunday, some of the visitors went to Church, others stayed in their rooms, and others rambled through the gardens and shrubberies attached to the house.

Let us go back a little. No sooner had Mrs. Somers finished her supper on the evening of the arrival of Mr. Henry and Miss Vandaleur than, full of information, she went to Mrs. Folliot's bed-room, and waited patiently until the latter retired from the drawing-room, "Oh Ma'am," said,

she, "to think that Mr. Henry de Noel and his servant Joseph are here."

"Well, what of that?" said Mrs. Folliot, "is he the very old gentleman that drove up in the carriage just before dinner, with a lady almost as old as himself?"

"The same, Ma'am."

Now Mrs. Folliot made a point of taking a preliminary survey of all new arrivals from behind the blinds of her bed-room window, which were always so arranged as to give the best possible view, with the least chance of being seen, and she had, with the quickness gained by long experience, reckoned up Mr. Henry and Miss Vandaleur. She knew at a glance that they were not man and wife. The former she put down as too old for her book, and the latter as too sharp for her fancy, and so dismissed them into the region of indifference. But when Somers, in glowing colours, described the vast landed estates of Mr. Henry, his beautiful carriage,

—which on his arrival was so covered with dust and dirt that its innate beauty was hidden—his generosity and gentlemanly bearing, and that added to this he was a bachelor, Mrs. Folliot began to think that for once in her life she was on the point of throwing away a chance, and, accordingly, she spent a great part of that night, and all the next day, in correcting the error of her ways. Her seat at table gave her a commanding view of Mr. Henry and his cousin, but not the most critical observer could find out that she was watching them all the while. Mrs. Folliot never *looked*, but nevertheless she *saw*. Whilst anyone would think that her eyes were on the flowers in the centre of the table, her vision was of things at the head or foot.

It did not take her long to find out that Mr. Henry could be twisted round her little finger, but that her difficulty would be with his female guardian.

The next day would be Sunday; could

the latter be kept out of the way, and Mr. Henry be induced to take a walk in the garden alone? Somers' former position in the De Noel family favoured her prospects. With an air of supreme indifference, but to which Somers was so accustomed that it did not deceive her, she said, "Somers, after you have dressed me for a walk to-morrow morning, you can have a chat with Miss Vandaleur; I daresay she would like to talk over old times, and as women like to have their little 'say says' to themselves, you can tell Mr. de Noel of the nice walk by the fine old chesnut which gives such a nice shade, and to prevent mistakes point out the way to him."

"Yes ma'am," replied Somers.

"And you know," continued Mrs. Folliot, "that you and Miss Vandaleur will have a good deal to say to each other, and that can't be done in five minutes, and, Somers, if she proposes to go and look after her

cousin, there are other walks in the garden quite as pleasant."

"Yes ma'am, I understand," said Somers, "and as Miss Vandaleur is new to the place it will be just as well that I should show her round."

"Exactly," replied Mrs. Folliot.

The next morning the latter put on the most effective walking-dress she had, and Somers handed her the handsomely bound Prayer-book, observing meekly that it looked proper, and Mrs. Folliot stepped through the glass door of the dining-room, and with the Prayer-book open, walked very slowly across the lawn to the fine old chesnut. So intent was she on the Prayer-book that Sir Charles Veysey, who was lazily sauntering about wishing for a chat with somebody, thought it best not to disturb her meditations, and went in a different direction, much to her relief, for she saw him, and dreaded his interference. She seated herself languidly on the seat

at the foot of the chesnut, and waited for the development of her plan.

Somers tapped at Miss Vandaleur's door, and found her in the arm-chair resting herself after the fatigue of the previous day. "I came, Madam," said the former, "to see how you are, and to ask after Mr. and Mrs. Robert and the children. I've just got to go into mistress's room to put things straight, I'll be back in a minute."

"Oh do," said Miss Vandaleur, "I feel tired, and I can give myself more thorough quiet here, and I should like to talk to you."

Having thus caged the female bird, Mrs. Somers hastened to throw herself in Mr. Henry's way, and found him in the act of taking his hat from the hatstand to walk in the garden. Somers curtseyed.—

"Good morning, Somers," said Mr. Henry, "Joseph told me you were here. I hope that you like your place."

"Oh yes, Sir, very much, thank you, I'm lady's maid to the Honourable Mrs. Folliot,

the daughter-in-law of the Earl of Borrowdale. She married his third son. She is such a nice lady, and the Earl is so fond of her. Poor thing, she lost her husband three years ago. He left such large estates in Ireland and Scotland, and they are hers for her life. She sits at table on the left hand side, opposite the large silver vase full of flowers. There is such a nice walk in the garden, Sir, and at the end of it a very fine old chesnut-tree, which spreads its branches all round, and make such a nice shade, and there is a seat. I will step out of the hall door and show you Sir."

Somers made Mr. Henry quite understand the way, and the old gentleman, striking the loose pebbles on the walk with his cane, walked slowly and neared the chesnut. The foliage drooped to the ground, large branches, resting on elbows, helped to support the mass above, and the whole formed a secluded retreat. Mr. Henry beheld a female form, intent upon an elegantly-bound

volume, located on the seat. His first impression was to turn round and avoid intruding on her privacy, but as he stood for an instant, irresolute what to do, the eyes were lifted from the book and met Mr. Henry's. To take off his hat and murmur an apology for intruding was what Mr. Henry did.

"Pray Sir, make no apology," said Mrs. Folliot, in the blandest of all accents, "this is a favourite retreat for us visitors, and one might do much worse than pass an hour under the shade of this magnificent tree," and thereupon Mrs. Folliot drew in her flowing dress as if to make room for him on the seat.

Mr. Henry, the very soul of gallantry, could not resist this mute appeal, and, to his great surprise, he found himself seated side by side with Mrs. Folliot under the almost impervious canopy of the chesnut.

"Your most humble servant, Madam," said Mr. Henry, again raising his hat, "I fear that I am interfering with your morning meditations."

"No," said Mrs. Folliot, with admirable ease, "it is true that I have been reading the services for the day, but I had just finished when I heard your footstep. Mr. Henry de Noel, I think."

"The same, Madam," said Mr. Henry, again raising his hat.

"I think," continued Mrs. Folliot, smiling, "that there is a kind of family connection between us. My excellent maid Somers was, I understand, in your cousin's family—her father, too, before her, for, I think she said, thirty-five years—how very nice it is to hear of these long-lasting ties between master and servant. And Somers says that your own man has been more than a quarter of a century with you. There must be something very good in men who thus attach their servants to them," and Mrs. Folliot looked at Mr. Henry as if she saw affection beaming in his face.

"Well, Madam," said Mr. Henry, "there must be good qualities on both sides I sup-

pose. The service you have been reading tells us that we are all miserable sinners, and therefore if we expect mercy ourselves we must shew it to others."

"That is such a nice sentiment," said Mrs. Folliot, "and if all men adopted it should we not be much better? It was so good of you to overlook the rudeness of those Browns. I am sure you are a kind —a very kind—man and have a heart open to a tale of distress. I have a letter this morning from my solicitor about my Irish estates. Poor Fred, I refer to my late dear husband the Hon. Federick Folliot, third son of Lord Borrowdale—perhaps in your visits among the upper ten you may have heard of him—he was such a good noble-hearted fellow, but never could master figures, and I don't know whether some money my solicitor has received belongs to me or the Earl. I suppose the will would tell me, but I am so stupid about such matters that I can't understand it, and my solicitor

wants an immediate reply. I should like you to see the will, and say what you think. I shall be in my private sitting-room, No. 10, this afternoon, and would feel greatly obliged by your advice."

"I shall be most happy, my dear Madam," replied Mr. Henry, "to throw any light on the question that I can, but I fear that I can't assist you, however I will do myself the honour of waiting upon you."

"There is just one thing I would add," said Mrs. Folliot, "and that is that I don't think the Earl would like to hear that I had been talking over family matters with a comparative stranger, and therefore I must ask you to be so kind as not to breathe a word to anyone, not even to your cousin."

"Certainly not, Madam, certainly not," said Mr. Henry.

Mrs. Folliot then rose, and arranging the capacious folds of her dress, offered her hand to Mr. Henry with a winning smile, and, assisting Mr. Henry to draw aside the cur-

tain of foliage, she bent her head to avoid the drooping branches and disappeared.

The only witness of Mrs. Folliot's emerging from the shade of the chesnut was Sir Charles Veysey, who was walking at some little distance. The circumstance did not attract any special notice on his part until he saw a few minutes afterwards the portly figure of Mr. Henry also emerge, and then he stopped, and whistled a gentle "Whew!" "What on earth can that *intrigante* be after—is she going to offer up that fine old fellow at the shrine of Fred Folliot?" he said to himself.

Now Mrs. Folliot stood in awe of Sir Charles. She knew that he could read her like a book, and she also knew that he, admitted into the best society, a member of Crockford's and White's, and received with acclammation at Limmer's when he did go there, which was seldom, had the private history of the Earl of Borrowdale and the Honourable Frederick Folliot at his finger ends; and such was the fact, but he was too much the gentleman

to indicate by word or look that he knew anything about the Borrowdale family, and often as Mrs. Folliot descanted largely upon the wealth and influence of that branch of the nobility she never could discover that Sir Charles (and Mrs. Folliot had her vision though not her eyes fixed upon him when she did so) had any knowledge of them or their affairs. As soon as she got in-doors she rang for Somers. "Order No. 10 to be got ready for me, I will lunch there. I ascertained this morning that it was at liberty."

Somers departed on the errand, and Mrs. Folliot turned out her dresses to select the most becoming one for afternoon. She opened her writing-case, and took out the will of the late Honourable Fredk. Folliot, which she wrapped up in pink paper, and tied round with white ribbon.

Somers returned, "Room at your service, Ma'am."

"Somers, did Miss Vandaleur go out this morning?"

"No Ma'am, but she did say that Mr. Henry seemed to have enjoyed his walk, as she was looking through her window when he returned."

"The more likely then that she will like a walk this afternoon," said Mrs. Folliot. "Somers, I want you to offer to show Miss Vandaleur round the grounds after lunch, an hour or two out will do her good. I have a little business to talk over with Mr. Henry, and it is not necessary that Miss Vandaleur should be present, or even interrupt us—family matters you know."

"I understand, Ma'am, quite well," said Mrs. Somers.

Mrs. Folliot finished her lunch, had the table cleared, and some flowers in a glass stand placed in the centre, and her writing-case with Fred Folliot's will in it on one side.

Miss Vandaleur retired to her room after lunch, and Somers was so good as to help her to dress for a walk in the grounds, and when she had seen her off with Mr. and

Mrs. Fraser, who had offered to accompany her, she reported progress to Mrs. Folliot. Mrs. Somers had previously arranged with Joseph that they should have a chat that afternoon over old times, and the more comfortably to do so she had asked the head housemaid to allow her the use of her little sitting-room, which was readily granted.

As Mrs. Folliot sat expecting Mr. Henry, so Mrs. Somers sat expecting Joseph. Mr. Henry was not quite easy in his mind about leaving Miss Vandaleur whilst he kept his appointment with Mrs. Folliot, and he was therefore greatly relieved when the Frasers asked his cousin at lunch to join them in a walk in the grounds, and he pleaded fatigue as an excuse for not going too.

As soon as Miss Vandaleur had started with the Frasers, Mr. Henry proceeded to No. 10, and tapping at the door Mrs. Folliot opened it, and welcomed him with charming frankness.

Mrs. Folliot asked Mr. Henry to take a seat by her side at the table, and opening her writing-case produced the will and spread it open. Holding it at each side with a fair hand, on which shone some choice rings which the Honourable Frederick Folliot had forgotten to pay for, she proceeded to read its provisions. Mr. Henry listened attentively, as word after word, in measured cadence, fell from Mrs. Folliot's lips, and at all the telling points she turned to Mr. Henry, and, looking fully in his honest face, asked him if he understood it, to which he replied that he did, and as the worthy gentleman became more and more intent on the document their faces approximated very closely, and when Mrs. Folliot had finished reading, her head, as if by natural attraction, fell gently on Mr. Henry's shoulder, and whilst a tear trickled down her cheek, she exclaimed, "It is hard, indeed, to fight these lawyers single-handed."

Mr. Henry seized Mrs. Folliot's lace pocket-

handkerchief which lay on the table, and commenced wiping away the tears which now coursed each other down her cheeks, whilst his face expressed the utmost perplexity and anxiety, and the perspiration broke out in large drops on his forehead. A knock was heard at the door, "Come in," said Mr. Henry, greatly relieved at the prospect of assistance, and the tall figure of Sir Charles Veysey stood in the door-way. The recumbent head of Mrs. Folliot left Mr. Henry's shoulder, the tears ceased to flow, and with flashing eyes Mrs. Folliot exclaimed, "Sir Charles Veysey, how dare you!"

"Beg pardon," said Sir Charles, bowing low, and instantly retreated closing the door.

Joseph having obtained leave for the afternoon, tapped at the head housemaid's parlour door, and Mrs. Somers, in cheery tones, bade him enter.

Mrs. Somers, after talking over Mr. Henry's affairs, into which Miss Vandaleur's name

was incidently dragged, naturally referred to the clock, and the dangers which it underwent in its comparatively unprotected state ; and Joseph so sympathised with her in her feelings upon that question, that he drew his chair nearer to hers in his efforts to console her, and this so overcame Mrs. Somers that her head sought the repose of Joseph's shoulder, whilst she exclaimed, "Oh! Joseph, if I could only find someone who would take care of my clock."

The handle of the door suddenly turned, whilst Joseph supported the half-fainting frame of Mrs. Somers, and the head housemaid entered, and, overcome with astonishment, exclaimed, "So this is what you wanted my room for, you hussey, get out of it immediately!"

The symptoms of fainting instantly left Mrs. Somers, and, fearing that the uplifted hand of the head housemaid entertained hostile intentions towards her Sunday cap, she left the room with surprising rapidity.

Joseph was quite staggered with the turn events had taken.

The head housemaid's plain speaking called him to a sense of the position in which he had been found in relation to Mrs. Somers, whilst his consciousness of innocence made him feel the words more pungently. "Indeed, indeed, Mrs. Smith, I meant no wrong," exclaimed Joseph, in his agony.

"I know you didn't," she replied, "it's all the fault of that hussey, and to tell you the truth, Mr. Joseph, I don't think much of her or her mistress either."

CHAPTER IX.

A WIDOW FAIR—NOT STAID.

It was conscience, and conscience alone, which caused Mrs. Folliot to leave No. 10 immediately after Sir Charles Veysey closed the door, and to retire to her own chamber, and ring the bell for Somers. It was the conscience of each, hard at work within, that prevented her seeing the guilty look on the face of the other. Mrs. Folliot hid her face from Somers as much as she could, and the latter adopted the like expedient. The former could not be sure that Stevens had not rushed into the servants' hall, and blurted out that Sir Charles had caught her with her head resting on Mr. Henry's shoulder. Somers could not be sure that the head housemaid had not hastened to Mrs. Folliot's room and informed her that she had been caught in the little parlour with Joseph's arm sup-

porting her fainting frame. But neither of the witnesses was a person to disclose the follies or frailties of others. Sir Charles regarded the disclosure of any awkward fact or question which came accidentally to his knowledge, and could be used to the detriment of another, as a sacred deposit, standing in the same category as information obtained by opening by mistake a letter intended for some one else. The head housemaid was a conscientious person, and owed her position to her character for prudence, discretion, and avoidance of tittle-tattle.

It was conscience that urged on Mrs. Folliot to pack up that very afternoon; it was that silent monitor which told her not to appear again in the public rooms, and made her next morning slip hastily down the staircase, and along the hall, and jump into the Matlock coach as soon as it stopped at the door, followed by Somers and the luggage.

Mrs. Folliot's sudden departure from No. 10, so sudden that she left the room without saying a word to Mr. Henry, perplexed and astonished the latter almost as much as did Mrs. Folliot's head falling upon his shoulder, and in the absence of that lady to look at he gazed vacantly at the door. Coming gradually into possession of his faculties, the peculiarity of his position forced itself upon him. In his right hand he retained the lace pocket-handkerchief with which he had arrested the tears flowing from Mrs. Folliot's eyes. Here was a piece of evidence against him! How could he get rid of it? He could not send it by Joseph to Mrs. Folliot's room with his compliments, nor ask him to give it to her maid. He could not, if he would, put it in the fire, as fires had not commenced. He could not hide it in his trunk, for Joseph had the arranging, opening, and shutting of his trunk, and held the key. So he put it into the side pocket of his coat for more mature consideration. But what about

Sir Charles Veysey finding him and Mrs. Folliot alone in No. 10, the latter in tears, with her head resting on his shoulder? Was it a dream? he was inclined to ask himself, for he could scarcely realize the fact that it was a dreadful reality. How could he face Sir Charles, how could he face Miss Vandaleur, and how could he face the other guests, and, worst of all, for they would be actuated by no feelings of delicacy, how could he bear the silent jeers and jibes of the servants as he took his seat at table? At last the thought struck him that Sir Charles, as a high-minded gentleman, could not and would not make his unintentional folly the nine days' wonder of the house. So he opened the door, and, unseen by anyone, gained his own room and rang the bell, and after a longer delay than usual Joseph knocked at the door. It was not a clear sharp knock given by an honest hand in the discharge of duty, but an undecided knock, a mixture of knuckle

and thumb, which spoke of indecision with a dash of fear. "Come in," said Mr. Henry, but not in the hearty sonorous tone in which he usually spoke. As Joseph entered he was busily engaged in looking through the window to ascertain the state of the weather, that at all events was his apparent object. Joseph, before entering, took out his pocket-handkerchief, and, as he stepped into the room, applied that appendage as if suffering from a severe cold. The silent monitor was at work within both.

"Joseph," said Mr. Henry, "find Sir Charles Veysey, I think I see him in the grounds. Tell him with my compliments that I should feel extremely obliged if he would be so kind as to step to my room as soon as he conveniently can."

"Yes Sir," and Joseph left the room greatly relieved in mind, for he had felt almost certain that the head housemaid had spread the knowledge of his peccadillo in the servants'-hall and that his master

had been told of it most likely by Stevens. He found Sir Charles in the grounds seated on a garden seat, and in a deep brown study, the face of the gallant soldier wearing a look of anxiety instead of its usually happy frank expression. Joseph was at his side before Sir Charles noticed him, and the latter started as the former, touching his hat, delivered his master's message.

"Give my compliments," said Sir Charles, "to your master, and say that I will be with him immediately." He required no telling to know what Mr. Henry wanted him for. The brown study had been caused by a feeling of distress at the idea of the "noble old gentleman," as he called him, being entangled in the wiles of that cunning widow, and that at a time of life when nature demands rest and freedom from anxiety. Sir Charles inherited, amongst other fine qualities, a good heart, which neither barrack nor camp, nor club nor drawing-room, had perverted from its original purity. He hated scandal, big or

little. He declined to hear, whether at the club or at mess, any stories as to the failings of others, male or female, feeling that if we could only see ourselves as others see us, there are few amongst us who can cast the first stone. He rose from his seat, and sauntering leisurely down the lawn, made his way to Mr. Henry's room.

"My dear Sir Charles," said Mr. Henry in a subdued tone, "I thank you sincerely for coming. I wished to explain to you the circumstances under which you found a man of my age in the—what shall I call it—the equivocal position in which I was in No. 10 this afternoon. Pray believe me, Sir Charles, when I say that anything wrong was as far as possible from my thoughts, but—"

"My dear Sir," interrupted Sir Charles, who had taken Mr. Henry's hand in both his, "I know all just as well as if you told me. I knew this morning that that cunning widow was making a 'plant' on you. I saw her go underneath the chesnut, I saw her

maid send you in the direction of the chesnut, and I guessed why."

"I saw you pass under the boughs; I saw her emerge by herself; and I saw you come out afterwards. Don't think for a moment that I was acting the 'Paul Pry.' Such a part is unworthy of the soldier and gentleman; but I could not help seeing it as I walked about on my favourite beat. And when I knocked at the door of No. 10, I had no conception that she was not alone, or I should not have done so. I will tell you candidly why I did knock at the door, to which I was directed by one of the hotel servants in answer to my enquiry if he knew where I should find Mrs. Folliot. I felt, Mr. De Noel, very much for you—I knew that anything like love-making was out of the question, and that the widow could have no possible object in view beyond entangling you if not in matrimony, at all events in toils which might worry and embarrass you for the remainder of your days. I carefully avoid, as a

rule, interfering in the affairs of others, but this case I consider exceptional. If you will permit me, a man so much younger than yourself, to say so, I have formed, in the very short time that I have had the pleasure of your acquaintance, a great regard and esteem for you, and it would distress me beyond expression if your frank and generous disposition were to be preyed upon by so worthless a woman. I know the history of the Borrowdale family well—any man may know it who goes into society. Fred Folliot's will is a standing joke too stale for London, but it answers well in the provinces, and it is not the first time that it has been spread out on a table, and the head let fall on a shoulder, and the tears set going. My object, therefore, in seeking an interview with Mrs. Folliot was to caution her against playing off any of her tricks upon you. I have treated her as a lady, much as I despise her, for women are generally what men make them, and Fred Folliot would have spoilt an angel

of a girl, and one can't say whether she is most to be blamed or pitied. She knows perfectly well that I can read her through, and that men who mix in society know the histories of Right Honourables and Honourab les pretty well, and that I could not be in entire ignorance of her antecedents. She knew why I opened her door as well as I did myself, and that was the reason that her eyes flashed fire, and she said 'How dare you!' She saw that her little game was up, and my strong impression is that she will not remain another twenty-four hours in the house."

Poor bewildered Mr. Henry! He listened to this disclosure of the iniquities of a member of the sex for which he felt such adoration with utter amazement. "My dear Sir Charles," he said, "you are so good and kind I can't thank you enough. It does so relieve my mind that a gentleman like yourself was the only witness of the very singular position in which you found me. Another man might have made me an object of ridi-

cule to the whole household, which would have been dreadful—indeed, I could not have borne it—I believe I should have taken poison if I could have got it, or drowned myself in the pond in the garden, and a coroner's inquest would have been held over my poor body."

Sir Charles, with a cordial shake of his hand, said, "We shall see you at dinner, of course, but I am sure we shan't see her—she won't shew up," and left him to recover his nerves.

Mr. Joseph was on the tenter-hooks. He, an old and faithful servant, against whose character nothing could be said, to be the subject of merriment at the servants' table, including the blue and scarlet of the Browns, whom he held at a distance, could not be endured. He had serious thoughts of putting a cravat and collar and a pocket-handkerchief into his pocket and seeking refuge amidst the mountains which bordered the horizon. On fuller consideration, however,

he determined to seek the bower where Mrs. Smith kept her sheets and towels, and induce that fairy to promise eternal secrecy. Circumstances aided his design. Going on his way from Mr. Henry's room to the servants'-hall he was about to pass Mrs. Smith's door,—

"Joseph," said a voice which sounded like that of an angel of peace, "I want to speak to you."

Joseph gladly replied "Yes" and entered.

"Now Joseph," said Mrs. Smith, "I want to relieve you from all anxiety as to whether I shall tell about you and Mrs. Somers in the servants'-hall. I shall do nothing of the kind, I know how unpleasant it might be made for you, about her. I don't care, and I have to assure you that I shall not mention it."

Joseph was ready to deify, for the first time in history, one of the family of Smith, but without going to that extent he expressed his gratitude in feeling terms.

A few minutes before the gong sounded announcing that the dinner was served Mr. Henry was in the passage in which his bedroom and Miss Vandaleur's were situate, waiting to escort his cousin to the dining-room. It was a long, wide passage, with seats at intervals, which enabled the visitors to sit outside their bedrooms in hot weather, with a refreshing current of mountain air entering it by a window at one end, and leaving it by a window at the other. Miss Vandaleur rallied Mr. Henry on his absence from her side all the afternoon, and hoped that the charms of widow Folliot, whom Miss Vandaleur had, notwithstanding all her cunning, noticed keeping a look out on Mr. Henry, would not estrange his affection from his cousin. Tapping his arm playfully with her fan she espied a piece of lace peeping from his coat pocket, and saying, "Pardon me, Cousin, what beautiful lace this is," she drew Mrs. Folliot's handkerchief from its

resting-place. "I congratulate you, Cousin," said Miss Vandaleur, with a curtsey, on your taste in ladies' handkerchiefs," and thereupon sat down on a seat.

Poor Mr. Henry, who had barely recovered his nerves sufficiently to enable him to take his seat at dinner, was thrown into a flutter again, and in the confusion of the moment could only exclaim, "I assure you, Cousin, I can explain all."

"No doubt, Sir," replied Miss Vandaleur, "you can explain everything, but the explanation like the gift had better not be in my presence," and with that she worked her fan fast and furiously.

"Oh dear, oh dear," said Mr. Henry. "What is to be done, Joseph?" said he to his servant, who walked some little distance behind them to take up his usual position at the back of their chairs, "For God's sake ask Sir Charles Veysey to come here if only for one instant."

"If you please, Sir," said Joseph to Sir

Charles, who had, as was his habit, taken his seat at the head of the table five minutes before the last gong sounded, "there is such a to-do between Miss Vandaleur and Mr. Henry, all about a lady's pocket-handkerchief, and Mr. Henry begs that you will be so good as to come to him for a moment."

Sir Charles repeated the "Whew!" which he whistled in the garden in the morning, and muttered "the women again—who was she? where is she? as the Indian Prince said—I'm coming Joseph," and followed him to where Miss Vandaleur sat with all the airs of Juno reproving the infidelity of Jupiter.

"For heaven's sake, Sir Charles," said Mr. Henry, advancing to meet him, "do clear my character; you know all about it, and I am so upset I can say nothing. My cousin has found Mrs. Folliot's handkerchief in my pocket, and thinks me a determined reprobate."

"Oh! is that all," said Sir Charles, "then I can tell you, Miss Vandaleur, in a word, that

your cousin is a pure-minded gentleman, and had nearly become the victim of an evil-minded woman, but as the second gong has sounded, I can say no more, but ask you to honour me by taking my arm to the dining-room, and meanwhile I will take charge of the handkerchief that has caused the mischief, and a very nice one it is (looking at it), and after dinner you shall have, if you require it, all details, but in mercy to the fallen perhaps you will not ask for them."

Miss Vandaleur was, like the rest of her countrywomen, as ready to forgive as to take umbrage, and leaning on the arm of Sir Charles she was again the happy woman, and, taking for a moment the arm of Mr. Henry also, told him that she would for once overlook his devotion to the fair sex on receiving a pledge of his good behaviour for the future.

Mrs. Folliot did not make her appearance, and this greatly added to Miss Vandaleur's satisfaction, for what woman does not enjoy trampling a competitor under foot.

It was on the Sunday evening—are not Sundays in England very *triste*—that Mr. and Mrs. Fraser's performance of the sacred music of the classical authors was appreciated more than at any other time. They sang piece after piece from the grand works of the great composers, and whilst the visitors were delighted, the servants, who assembled on the stairs, were not less so, and pretty Mrs. Fraser received no end of compliments from the young officers from Lumechester; and Sir Charles Veysey sat at her side and favourably compared the music with that he had heard at the best houses in Rome and Naples; and the accomplished little horsewoman said she would give up riding and study music if cousin Harry would not be cross; and all the clergy joined in commendation of the taste which selected music so full of grand ideas as well as melody; and Mrs. Fraser was happy and looked in her husband's face to see if he was happy too, and she saw that he was, and she was content.

Mrs. Folliot's luggage was simply marked "Matlock" without the addition of the name of any hotel, as when she arrived at Buxton. "Somers," she said, as soon as she got settled down inside the coach, "we must decide what hotel to go to." (Fie Mrs. Folliot! you knew you had decided on the Hotel.) "There is the Crown, but I am afraid they will have a recollection of a little bill there, which dear Fred and I ran up, and for which, as he was short of cash, he gave his acceptance, but, it was inconvenient to meet it when due. There is a pretty little hotel, now, I recollect, small, but so nice, the Ivy Cottage Hotel. We used to admire it as we drove by, nearly hidden in ivy, honeysuckles, and roses, not too large, never more than three or four sets in the house, and three or four quiet bachelors in the coffee-room, kept by two old maids who, between them, do the cooking, which is rather plain but first rate of its kind, wines good too, and prices much more moderate than at the

Crown. I know that they let a snug little parlour, and bed-room opening from it, at a bearable figure, so we will go there."

Mrs. Somers was in quite as great a hurry to leave the Regent as Mrs. Folliot herself. She never entered the servants'-hall after the head housemaid's discovery without expecting to be greeted with a roar of laughter, and what added to her misery was that Joseph had changed his seat from her side to one close to the head housemaid's, as if he considered it advisable to place himself under the protection of the latter. It was joy at her own escape that at first deadened the sense of wonder and astonishment at Mrs. Folliot's sudden departure ; but being now free from anxiety she set to work to discover the why and wherefore. She started from the basis that Mrs. Folliot had not on the Sunday at lunch the remotest idea of leaving the Regent until the close of the season ; for she had obtained from her much enduring

dress-maker, who, Mrs. Folliot considered, was amply paid by the honour of having the daughter-in-law of the Earl of Borrowdale as a customer, a plentiful supply of the most fashionable autumn dresses; and from her not less enduring Parisian artiste, paid in the same liberal way, two charming bonnets of the newest style. Starting from this standpoint, Mrs. Somers commenced a process of trial-reasoning in which she was much aided by the noise of the wheels preventing conversation between her mistress and herself. First: Why should Mrs. Folliot give her the instructions she did on the Sunday morning, instructions pointing unmistakeably to Mr. Henry and Miss Vandaleur? Second: Why did Mrs. Folliot engage No. 10 for that one day? Third: Where was that expensive lace pocket-handkerchief which she had given to Mrs. Folliot just before lunch, and had not seen since, though she had looked in every direction for it?

It was clear there was a "He" in the case, but who was the "He?" Sir Charles Veysey? No! Knows too much. Who else in the house? The young officers? No! Fred over again, with the disadvantage of youth. The clergy? Out of the question, besides, they had their wives with them. The Baronets? No, too proud, family men also. It could not be Mr. Henry surely?

"As sure as my clock ticks when it's set going," said Mrs. Somers to herself, "it is." And it was a comfort and a consolation to Mrs. Somers to arrive at the conclusion, for if the little *exposé* about Joseph should come to her mistress's ears, and the latter begin to talk to her in the "exalted virtue" strain, as she sometimes did in order that Mrs. Somers might be able to speak thereof, she knew how to stop her.

As soon as Mrs. Folliot had taken possession of the snug rooms at the Ivy Cottage Hotel she requested Somers to bring her

writing case, and wrote the following letter,—

Ivy Cottage Hotel, Matlock, Monday.

My dear Friend,

The event of yesterday made such an impression upon me that I thought it best to leave for this place. In one respect that impression was one of pleasure, for it told me how your kind and generous heart yearned to afford me comfort and consolation under the trials which must of necessity befall one placed in my position—the proprietor of large landed estates at the mercy of lawyers and agents. In another respect the event gave me pain, for it has placed it in the power of that most unprincipled man of the world, Sir Charles Veysey, to misrepresent your motives and mine, when we were discussing in a perfectly innocent manner the mode of extricating myself from a pressing trouble. Believe me, my dear Sir, that I shall always remember the very great kindness you showed to one who is almost

a stranger to you. Begging you to accept my sincere thanks.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your grateful friend,

AMELIA FOLLIOT.

To Henry de Noel, Esq.

P.S.—I nearly omitted to say that I shall be very glad to see you in this dear little Hotel. I have two such snug rooms, A. F.

When Mrs. Folliot handed this letter to Somers to take to the post the latter endeavoured by pressing the sides outwards (envelopes were not then used) to read the contents, but could only decipher the words "unprincipled man of the world, Sir Charles Veysey," and was then further satisfied, in addition to the address of the letter, that the "He" was none other than Mr. Henry.

CHAPTER X.

HEAVENWARDS.

So soon as Mrs. Robert's state would permit she was removed to the Yews. As she entered the hall, Master Lawrie on his rocking-horse was busy propelling it to and fro with such force that the nose of the steed nearly touched the ground in the forward movement, whilst its tail did the like in the backward one. Jumping off instantly, he sprang towards his mamma's arms, but she was too weak to lift him, and bent over him and kissed him. "What's nurse got there?" he said, as he heard a faint cry proceed from a large shawl.

"You shall see presently," said his mamma laughing, and then he jumped on to his rocking-horse and urged the steed on again.

Poor Mrs. Robert nearly fainted with the

exertion of the journey, and it was not until a glass of port wine had been brought her that she could mount the stairs to her room, and then she was obliged to take the arm of Mr. Robert's servant who had arrived with them. Her maid assisted her to bed where she remained all day. In the evening Mr. Robert came, and dismounting from his horse, went direct to his wife's room. He bent over the pale face with a fond look, and kissed her, and in a low voice enquired how she had borne the journey.

She replied, "Very well dear, and I intend to get so strong here, and go back to the Close made over again."

He saw the little head nestling on her bosom, and bending down kissed the tiny stranger, and Mrs. Robert smiled and said "Is it not a sweet little thing, it is so good."

The sweet little thing bloomed into a beautiful generous girl, full of all good impulses, and gave her hand to the youth she

loved, and as they stood at the altar finer specimens of manly and girlish beauty could be seen nowhere, but as he put the ring on her finger, an invisible spectre raised the bitter cup and held it towards her lips.

Master Lawrie, riding on the back of his nurse, came to say good night, and as she held him to kiss his mamma the latter with a smile asked him what was he going to be.

"A coachman," he said, "and I'll upset all the other coaches."

Mr. Robert patted him fondly on the head and gave him a shilling, which Lawrie on leaving the room slipped into his nurse's hand for giving him a ride. Mr. Robert sat by the bedside holding his wife's hand whilst she talked cheerily about herself, and said what improvements she would make in the garden in the spring, and then the nurse entered and told Mr. Henry that his dinner was ready, and he left the room.

"Tell Mattie," said Mrs. Robert to the nurse, "that I shall be glad to see her," and Mattie in a few minutes came with a curtsey into the room. Mrs. Robert took her hand and said, "Mattie, I am so much obliged to you for taking care of Lawrie; what would have become of him I can't say without his nurse at the Close, and with Will's mischievous propensities."

Mattie coloured, for she knew about the bull bait and the swimming lesson, and in fact had been in a state of anxiety ever since her arrival as Master Will had announced his intention not to allow Lawrie to be "molly-coddled" and had acted up to it. Then Mrs. Robert made the colour come into the girl's cheeks again by asking after young Cuthbertson, saying that she had heard such a good account of him, that she was sure she would be happy, and that as soon as she could get about she would buy her something that would be useful as a wedding present. And then the girl asked if she might look at baby,

and Mrs. Robert lifted the bed clothes and shewed the little thing fast asleep, and Mattie said "Oh! what a dear little creature!"

After his dinner Mr. Robert again came to his wife's room, and before they parted for the night he knelt by her bed-side and poured out a prayer to the Almighty that he would be graciously pleased to look on his dear wife, and vouchsafe her a speedy recovery.

Mrs. Robert slept a sweet sound sleep, only interrupted by the cravings of the infant, and when her husband came in the morning to bid her good-bye, she said she was so much better, and that she enjoyed the pure air and bright sunshine so much, and that she should get up for dinner. On his way to Lumechester, though it was early, Mr. Robert called on the good vicar, and said how glad he should be if he would look in and see his wife occasionally, and this the vicar promised to do. And then he called upon the much respected little doctor, dressed in drab

breeches and gaiters, and asked him to attend to his wife, and told him that he should be glad if he would call that day. A little further on he dismounted, and fastening the reins of his horse to the gate which formed the entrance to a pretty cottage residence, knocked at the door, and told the Miss Ribtons that his wife had arrived at the Yews, and would be glad to see them when they could find it convenient to call.

The Miss Ribtons were nice specimens of the old maid. There were three of them, and they lived upon a competency left them by their father, formerly a much respected merchant in Lumechester. Mr. Robert had known him, and when he purchased the Yews the daughters were much delighted for they loved Mrs. Robert, and she loved them. Miss Vandaleur, whose delicate features stood in strong contrast to their broad but not coarse features, said that her father always liked a broad face because there was "plenty of space for the light of heaven to

shine upon it," and the faces of the Miss Ribtons were indicative of their characters. Each had her "specialty," The eldest, "Angelica" was her name, was the accomplished Miss Ribton, she played upon the organ and piano, and was unpaid organist at the Parish Church, and taught the village choir. She was in great request at the family balls given in the neighbourhood, and would, without the least sympton of ennui, stick at the piano playing dance music by the hour. The second was the practical Miss Ribton. She took charge of the housekeeping, and was great in soups, entrées, and jellies.

Cookery books were then rare and expensive and she who had acquired the "breast laws" of cooking possessed a very desirable qualification. Perhaps, in anticipation of her knowledge of the good things of this world, she had been christened "Penelope," which in Greek means "a turkey" The youngest was the sentimental Miss Ribton, and was called "Agatha." She was read up in novels

and wrote gushing letters for herself and sisters, and shed tears over dead robins. The abode of the three sisters was the *beau ideal* of rustic elegance. The front garden was beautifully laid out. The rose and honeysuckle clustered round the windows. A nice conservatory filled with exquisite plants struck the eye of the visitor as he opened the gate. At the back a well-kept lawn was bordered by peach, nectarine, plum, and pear trees clinging to the walls. A rockery and fernery shewed no little taste in their arrangement. Under the shade of a fine old tree, at the foot of which was a rustic chair and a garden table, Miss Agatha composed her letters, and identified herself with the heroines of the novelist.

No nicer house was there to visit at than the Ribtons. Good music, an excellent table, and a sketch of the last new love story awaited the visitor. And the Miss Ribtons were almost as great out of doors as in. They visited the sick, and

took them preparations from herbs, cunningly concocted from recipes in their mother's hand-writing, not the less acceptable as being accompanied by little delicacies prepared by the hands of the fair Penelope. They were also great at needlework, and if a little "Arab" happened to pass the door disclosing a rent in his raiment, one of them would entice him into the house by the offer of cake, and send him out in a state of repair.

Their delight was unbounded when they knew Mrs. Robert was at the Yews again. Poor thing, said Angelica, as soon as she can bear it I will play for her that fine piece from Stabat Mater. And I, said Penelope, will at once make a large mould of the jelly that she likes so much. And I, said Agatha, will read to her—she will so like the last Edgeworth. Then they combined to make up the finest bouquet their garden produced, and Agatha, the sentimental, was deputed to bear it to Mrs.

Robert that very morning with their united love, and bring back a report concerning the baby's looks.

So Agatha departed to the Yews, and was joyfully received in her room by Mrs. Robert, who was too fatigued with the journey to rise, and she placed the bouquet in a crystal vase on a little table near the bed, and was so pleased when Mrs. Robert said,

"Agatha, my dear, it is so kind of you to come and see me so soon, and bring me that lovely bouquet, it quite lights up an invalid's bed-room; but I shall be quite strong soon, and then my first visit shall be to your pretty cottage."

A little later on the Vicar came, and Mrs. Robert requested that he might be shewn into her room.

The good kind old man felt much distressed when he saw how she was changed for the worse, and in his own mind he arrived at the most unfavourable conclusion; but he carefully concealed his convictions,

and spoke cheerfully when he referred to the great "hereafter" as being the one aim and object of the true Christian, and he left her promising to see her in a day or two, and begged of her to send for him whenever she wished to see him. For his mother's sake he heartily forgave Master Will, and spoke kindly to him when he met him in the hall, and begged of him to abstain from firing off his brass cannon until his mother was quite well, and Master Will was quite broken-hearted at the solemn manner in which the Vicar spoke, and offered to deposit the brass cannon and all the gunpowder at the Vicarage as a material guarantee against future salvos of artillery.

The visit of the Vicar was followed by that of the doctor. A harder-worked man it was difficult to meet with. His duties as parish doctor, remunerated by the munificent sum of £35 a year, including physic, were enough for one man. But he never repined, although it was clear to every

one in the parish that the medicine alone must cost him the money. He said that whether the Guardians paid him or not he should perform his duty with the pleasing conviction that every urchin that he met in his rides was indebted to him for being safely brought into the world. The doctor was no less respected by the rich than beloved by the poor, and Mrs. Robert greatly esteemed him as an able and conscientious man.

He entered the room with that kindly smile, the comforting effect of which is only known to those who have lain on a sick bed.

"My dear Madam," he said, "we are glad to see you,—Going on all well, no doubt," and with that he took her hand and felt her pulse. He turned his head away lest his face might betray his apprehensions. The pulse beat feebly and intermittently. "A month ago and more since you were confined, I think, ?"

"Yes," said Mrs Robert, "and I feel very well."

"Appetite good?"

"Yes," replied Mrs. Robert, "very fair. I shall get up to dinner to-day with Robert."

"I think, my dear Madam," said the Doctor, seriously, "we must put a negative on that, you are fatigued with the journey here, and I think we must keep you in bed to-day at all events. I will look in to-morrow morning and then we will talk about getting up."

As he left the room he looked at the nurse, and she followed him into the drawing-room.

"Nurse," he said, "I don't like your mistress's looks at all. Her pulse is very unsatisfactory, and she must be kept perfectly quiet or we cannot answer for the consequences, but be careful not to alarm her, and say nothing to Mr. Robert. I will see her again early to-morrow morning and in the mean-

time she must take a draught, which I will send, twice."

Nurse returned to the room, and as Mrs. Robert seemed inclined to go to sleep she laid the baby in the basinet, and took it into the nursery where she placed it before the fire, and returned to Mrs. Robert, leaving the nursery door open. Master Lawrie, who was in the hall, and at that time rather quiet, being engaged in an anatomical examination of the structure of the rocking-horse, and was trying with a gimblet to discover how its eyes were fixed in their sockets, hearing a cry from the nursery which was new to his ears, crept upstairs, and beheld his little sister fighting the air with her tiny fists, and crying out in the manner which is satisfactory to a nurse's ears.

"Baby," he said, "you be quiet,"—and held down its arms as nurse had done to him when he got into a passion. Then he recollected having seen his little sister, two

years younger than himself, nursed by his dear little sister who was two years older than himself, and thereupon he pulled the infant out of the basinet, and holding it with difficulty in his arms, staggered about the room with it.

"Good gracious me," exclaimed the nurse, who had just come in, "he'll kill the baby!" and snatching it out of his arms replaced it in the basinet. "How dare you," she said, "you naughty boy, touch the baby, and your mamma so ill."

Little Lawrie comprehended for the first time that his mother was ill, and he went into the hall and leant over his rocking-horse, and thought what should he do if he saw his dear mamma looking like the dying man at the road-side, and the tears ran down his cheeks at the idea of her leaving him, and then his father's severe face haunted him, and he felt that he could never love his father like he did his dear mamma, and then he slowly crept upstairs

and sat outside his mother's bed-room ; and when nurse came out he asked in a whisper "How is Mamma?" and stayed there until his nurse came and took him away.

When Mr. Robert came home, he learnt that the doctor had been and prohibited Mrs. Robert leaving her bed, and his heart sank within him, for it tallied sadly with his own misgivings.

The next day the doctor called, and again suggested that Mrs. Robert should not leave her bed, and she rallied him on his gloomy looks, and said she felt much better, and that he must not look so serious or it would make her cry, and then Robert would be so distressed.

That evening when Mr. Robert came home he had a letter for her. It was from Miss Vandaleur, and ran as follows,

Buxton, Monday,

My Very Dear Cousin,

Not an hour has passed since I left Lumechester that I have not had you in

mind. I cannot tell you how good it was of you to urge me to join Mr. Henry in his trip here. The mountains remind me of dear County Wicklow, where my father broke his neck in hunting, and my mother ran away with him. Dear good old cousin is so kind, and a widow, the honourable Mrs. Folliot, fell in love with him, and she left this morning first thing for the baths at Matlock, and if she fell into one of them and was drowned it would not be any great loss to the public. And there is such a charming Irishman here, Sir Charles Veysey, and he takes the head of the table, and is third cousin to my fourth cousin on my mother's side, Tom O'Connor, of the Connaught Rangers, and is quite fond of Mr. Henry, and has placed us on his right, because he is at the head of the table, and pays me very fine compliments. And Cousin Henry was all but calling out a Mr. Brown, a cotton manufacturer, here with his wife, for insolence, but Mr. Brown

showed the white feather and begged Mr. Henry's pardon and mine, and on Saturday we went on an excursion with them to Haddon Hall, and came home all safe as the champagne got quite into my head. And I do hope, my dear cousin, that you and the baby are coming on well, and that Mr. Robert is also well, in which wish Mr. Henry begs me to say that he most heartily joins, and we shall stay here until Mr. Henry finds that his arm is quite well, and his appetite restored, and can dispense with a bandage.

From your loving cousin,

KATE VANDALEUR.

Mrs. Robert and her husband laughed at the Irishism of the letter, and the queer admixture of love and pistols which it contained.

Mrs. Robert continued to talk gaily day after day about her recovery, but it became evident that she was fast sinking under what is called a "galloping consumption,"

and her husband no longer flattered himself with delusive hopes.

Her strength waned, and her eyes grew dimmer, and the little hand became still smaller, and the infant was obliged to be taken from her, as she no longer could give it sustenance, and then the truth flashed upon herself, that though only thirty-five she was doomed to leave those whom she loved so fondly. And then her spirits rose from the mortal to the Immortal, and whilst still on earth she held communion with heaven.

At last the waiting Angel, jealous of earth so long detaining the treasure, beckoned her to come, and with her left hand laid on her kneeling husband's head,—whilst her lips muttered blessings upon him—and her right hand raised as if in answer to the heavenly call, her gentle spirit left its fragile frame, and winged its way to the realms of eternal bliss.

CHAPTER XI.

A WIFE'S SACRIFICE.

We must revert to the period anterior to Mrs. Robert's death. She had not overlooked her promise to Mrs. Basford, to speak to Mr. Robert in favour of her husband. Mr. Robert, being a man of note in the religious world, had peculiar facilities for ascertaining whether Basford's private character coincided with his public professions of religion, and the result was that, from every quarter in which he made enquiries, he was told that he was a man of high character, both in a moral and religious point of view, and that his only failing was over-zeal in conducting the battle of the working man against unjust laws and the tyranny of money. Mr. Robert never took part in any general or local politics, for he noticed that many of those who

did so frequently shewed a lamentable want of ability in managing their own affairs, and he determined that whatever efforts he made in favour of Basford should be independent of local celebrities. After arranging the letters he had received speaking to Basford's character, he called upon the chief constable and was shown into his room. In the passage he met Green, who took off his hat and respectfully enquired about Mrs. Robert's health, and shewed much concern on learning how dangerously ill she was. Mr. Robert took the opportunity of asking Green what he thought of Basford.

"I can only say, Sir," he replied, "that I never felt such unwillingness to arrest a man, and it was duty only that made me do it, and if ever Richard Basford comes out of prison and wants a twenty-pound note to help him in life again, John Green's purse shall be at his service,—he's a good man, Sir."

This hearty praise from Green made

Mr. Robert the more resolved to do all he could for Basford.

On being shewn into the Chief's room he shook hands with him, and the latter, no less than Green, sympathized with Mr. Robert in his distress about his wife. "Let us hope for the best," he said, "her loss would be greatly felt by the poor in the neighbourhood of the Close."

Mr. Robert then proceeded to enquire as to Basford's conduct in prison. "It is exemplary," replied the Chief, "he is of great assistance to us in preserving order. We have a large number of prisoners at present, many charged with political offences, and with these we can't deal as with ordinary criminals, and Basford having great influence with them we find him very useful as the turnkeys are overworked."

Mr. Robert then produced the letters which the Chief read over. Returning them he said,—

"I can quite believe all that is said in

Basford's favour, and if I had the will I would set him at liberty at once, simply taking his word that he would abstain from repeating his conduct, and I think that would be enough, for I have observed a great change since we had him here last. He abstains from all political discussions with his fellow prisoners, and I incline to think that he repents his folly. May I ask what your object is?"

"I wish to make an effort to obtain his release," replied Mr Robert.

The Chief shook his head, "I fear," he said, "it is useless. The fact is that the Government are thoroughly alarmed at the insurrectionary spirit abroad, and almost dread that the scenes in Paris at the end of the last century may be repeated here. The political aspect is at present unfortunate. The King unable to attend to public affairs, and the Regent unpopular, the State vessel seems to be drifting hither and thither. Certainly this neighbourhood is like a

volcano. Would you like to see him and learn his own views? He might be disposed to offer to ship himself off to America, and that would be the best thing he could do."

"I will see him, I think," said Mr. Robert, and the Chief drew up an order to that effect.

With this Mr. Robert proceeded to the prison, and was shewn into a room where interviews with prisoners were permitted, and Basford, who was then engaged in superintending some prisoners at work in the prison yard, was sent for.

Basford raised his cap respectfully, but was not aware who the visitor was.

"Richard Basford," said Mr. Robert, "I am Robert de Noel, the father of the boy you carried off to Wellgate-court, and I have called to see you at the request of Mrs. Robert, and in performance of a promise that she made to your wife."

"Thank you kindly, Sir," said Basford.

Mr. Robert proceeded, "I have made

enquiries about you, and have a number of letters here speaking very favourably of your character, and in ordinary times I should have little difficulty in obtaining your release on your promising not to repeat the offence; but the Chief Constable, who also speaks in your favour, doubts whether the Government will release you on a mere promise, and may require some further guarantee."

"I am deeply grateful, Sir, for your kindness," said Basford, "and I am quite ready to agree to anything Government may require that is in my power. I have had time to reflect over my past life. I have been staying with Mary, that is my wife, at Ebenezer Thorneycroft's at Saint Peter's in the Rocks—he's a good man, is Ebenezer—and he talked to me, and so did Mary, and I've made up my mind to give up politics, and I think, Sir, as I should be twitted with being a turn-coat, I would like to go to America and get out of this altogether. I haven't told Mary so yet, but I think she

would make up her mind to leave the old folks and go with me."

"If," said Mr. Robert, "I could tell the Government so, it would have much weight with them, but I will not propose it until I have the full consent of your wife, as it would look as if I was helping to separate you and her."

"Mary will be here to day, Sir, and I'll ask her, and she shall write to you herself," said Basford. Mr. Robert, then, in a delicate way, asked him if he could be of any service to him in money matters, and Basford, with many thanks, assured him that he was not in need of money. Mr. Robert shook Basford's hand cordially on leaving, for he could not help feeling respect for his manly bearing under his misfortunes.

On Mr. Robert's calling at the Close, before leaving for the Yews in the evening, he found a letter from Mary Basford, saying that she would follow her husband "to the end of the world."

On reaching the Yews, Mr. Robert found his wife able to converse a little, and narrated what had taken place, and it gave Mrs. Robert's kind heart much pleasure to learn that Basford was worthy of their interest; and when Mr. Robert told her what Mrs. Basford had said in her letter, she pressed her husband's hand and said, "She is no true wife if she would not."

Mr. Robert wrote a plain statement to the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and enclosed it with the letters in Basford's favour and posted it. He laid stress upon Basford being willing to go to America, and undertake not to return, and had great hope that his request would be complied with; but at the end of a week he received a reply as follows,—

Whitehall, October 10, 1819.

Sir,—I am directed by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department to inform you, that after a careful consideration of the statement in

favour of Richard Basford, forwarded by you, he sees no reason to depart from the usual course, and his case must be decided by a jury, who will no doubt take into account any evidence as to good character tendered by him. I beg to return you the letters which accompanied the statement.

I am, Sir, Your obedient servant,

CECIL LE MARCHANT.

To Robert de Noel, Esquire.

Mr. Robert lost no time in sending the letter to Richard Basford, with a word of consolation.

It did not take the latter by surprise, as he was fully aware of the anxiety of the Government about the state of the manufacturing districts, and all along was afraid that they would not relax the law in favour of anyone who had taken part in the late disturbances; but his wife had buoyed up her hopes with the expectation that her husband would be set at liberty,

and the shock was great when he placed the letter in her hands. She left him with a sorrowful heart and full of forebodings. She could not rest night or day, for the possibility of her husband being treated as a felon and transported for life haunted her continually. That he might possibly be hung for high treason did not enter her head. She had read somewhere of a Scotch girl who had walked all the way from Edinburgh to London to beg the king to save her sister's life, and she asked herself why could she not walk to London and ask the king to save her husband from transportation?

She made up her mind to undertake the task. She drew up, in her own simple and informal way, a petition to the king to save her husband from degradation, not knowing that the legal power was virtually vested in the Prince Regent, and when she had done so the practical question presented itself—How was she to get it into

the King's hands? She knew no one whose opinion she could ask except Mr. Robert, and she determined to throw herself on his kindness.

She went to the Close, and found that Mrs. Robert was at the Yews, and with great difficulty induced the servant who answered her knock to let her wait in the hall until Mr. Robert looked in, prior to leaving for the Yews.

As he entered she rose from the hall chair, and curtseyed, and said that she was the wife of Richard Basford, and then the tears rolled down her cheeks and she could scarcely speak. Mr. Robert requested her to come into the library, and spoke some soothing words to her, and then she opened the subject of her errand. He listened attentively to all she had to say, but felt bound to express much doubt of her success. He explained to her that all the control of public affairs was virtually in the hands of the Ministers, and that neither the King

(could he attend to business, which he told her he could not) nor the Prince Regent had any power in the matter. In her unsophisticated way she asked if the king had a wife, and being told that she was dead, the hope that she would, "see a woman righted" vanished. Mr. Robert handed her the letters in Basford's favour, and asked her if she knew anyone in London, and she replied "No."

"What, not anyone?" said Mr. Robert, feeling what an up-hill task she had before her.

"Not anyone," she replied.

"God keep the poor woman," muttered Mr. Robert, and then reflected for a moment. He had had some business transactions with a worthy alderman of the City of London, Sir Carpenter Whytebate, which had been very satisfactory to both, and the Alderman had two or three times asked him to take a run up to town, and said that he would initiate him into the festivities at the Man-

sion House, an inducement which, had Sir Carpenter known Mr. Robert's habits, he would have omitted holding out to him. Mr. Robert, judging by his letters—for he had not seen him—that he was a kind-hearted man, and thinking that his position as alderman would give him a certain amount of influence, wrote a letter, stating in a few words the sum and substance of Basford's case, adding that the bearer was his wife, and that he would feel personally obliged by his rendering her such assistance as lay in his power.

This he handed open to Mrs. Basford, and wished her success, and the poor creature much comforted, and thanking Mr. Robert very heartily, left him.

In those days a journey to London was not only a long affair, but it could only be accomplished at a very heavy expense; and Mary Basford, having the costs of the trial in view, felt that she ought not to pay the coach fare, and resolved to walk all the way.

Before starting she bade good-bye to her husband, who was deeply affected by this proof of affection, and could not sufficiently blame himself for having brought all this trouble upon her. The day after the interview she locked up her house at Drawbridge, and leaving the key with a neighbour, started upon her walk of about two hundred and twenty miles.

She took the route through Buxton and Matlock, having with her as little impedimenta as possible.

The mountain scenery which she passed through reminded her of the few happy days at Saint Peter's in the Rocks. She neared Buxton, and was seated by the wayside when a carriage passed. She knew the face of the lady who sat on the side nearest to her, and the next moment the carriage stopped, and Miss Vandaleur, handed out by a stout gentleman—it was Mr. Brown himself—came towards her. "Faith! it's Mrs. Basford," exclaimed Miss Vandaleur, "the

poor creature! what are ye doing in these parts?" and Mrs. Basford shortly stated what errand she was upon, and the kind-hearted Irishwoman shed tears over her, to think what a task she had before her.

Mr. and Mrs. Brown caught the infection, and Mr. Henry offered to give up his seat to her and walk to the Regent, which Mrs. Basford would not hear of, and the end of it was that she was to come to the Regent at her leisure, and that she should have a bed there. And when she did arrive, and Mr. Brown understood that she was the wife of the man who had made many speeches against him, and described him as a bloated capitalist, he sank all feelings of animosity, and ordered that she should have every comfort and attention at his own expense, and at nobody else's, and moreover gave her a letter stating that in his opinion, as a large manufacturer at Drawbridge, the conduct of Richard Basford (always excepting his strong political opin-

ions) was in the highest degree creditable; and went so far as to say that the Government would do a wise thing to set him at liberty, as it would give them a character for clemency; especially as he understood that he had determined to give up the calling of an agitator. And when Mrs. Basford started off early the following morning, on her weary way, Mr. Robert was there, and took off his hat in homage to a good woman, and Mrs. Brown thrust a note into her hand marked "private," and said that she was not to open it until she got two miles from Buxton, and Miss Vandaleur gave her a letter to an Irish member of Parliament who was fifth cousin to her, and was "a nice man."

Poor Mrs. Basford thought herself half way to London, so refreshed was she by the kindness she had received; but she found that London was a long way off.

When over the two miles from Buxton she opened Mrs. Brown's letter, and enclosed

in a sheet of note paper she found a five pound note.

The coachman and guard of the "High-flyer" noticed her on the road day after day. "I'm blessed, Tom," shouted the former to the latter one day, "if that woman isn't own sister to the Wandering Jew." Tom replied "Can't help thinking so, pull up and I'll get her on board and ask her."

So he jumped down, and in a kind manner said "Missus, you've been on the walk many a day—we've got room behind, get up, and it shall cost you nothing to the next stage."

Poor Mrs. Basford's feet were beginning to swell, and she was only too glad to get a lift for a few miles, and the dashing young guard dropped all his conceited ways, and talked kindly to her; and when she told him her simple tale, he could not help passing his buckskin glove over his eyes.

At the end of the stage she wanted to press a shilling upon him, but he would

not take it, and said that if he had a seat to spare on his next up journey she should have it with pleasure.

So Mrs. Basford plodded on, and not only the guard of the "Highflyer" gave her a lift if he had a seat vacant when he overtook her, but the guard of the "Lightning" did the same. Still, with all their assistance, it took many a wearisome day to do the whole two hundred and twenty miles.

Now, gentle reader, let us pause to ask, Do we gain in point of comfort of mind and personal ease by the speed of the present day? Whilst my pen is doing its allotted work a loud double knock, indicative of urgency, strikes my ears, and startles my nerves. 'Tis a telegram! Were not troubles bad enough when they travelled at the rate of ten miles an hour only, and are they not intensified by a speed of miles in a second?

We were once seated at breakfast at 8 a.m. at Sarnia, at the foot of Lake Huron, and the local paper, nominally marked ten cents, but

charged to us at 25 cents, was placed in our hands. "Do we read rightly?" we exclaimed, in a kind of mental frenzy, on seeing the quotation of prices on the London Stock Exchange at eleven o'clock that morning. "Impossible!" we exclaimed, and were only too ready to believe in the impossibility, inasmuch as certain stocks which we held were unaccountably going down. However, on consideration, we said that the thing was possible, as eleven o'clock a.m. in London, meant about five o'clock at New York. The fact is, we are becoming a prey to the genius "Invention." The buffalo and bison, the elk and the red-deer, are disappearing before the rifle, and, thanks to female taste, so are the ostrich and the seal. The elephant can only be found in the deepest and furthest jungle. Coal mines and lead mines are shewing exhaustion. Who shall say what is the unexpired span of earth's life?

Mary Basford at last drew near to the great City. She reached that once cele-

brated hostelry, the Angel at Islington, just at the moment that the long train of four-in-hands dashed up and stopped for two or three minutes, prior to starting on their way to the midland and northern counties. Many a representative of a long lineage sought refuge on the box from the troubles and turmoils of John Doe and Richard Roe. Many a hand, soft and white-gloved, was extended with the words "Coachman, if you please, my lady," and not unfrequently a sovereign found its way into the palm of a former Oxonian or Cantab.

Is there anything degrading in a man seeking by honest toil to relieve the pressure of a money crisis? Quite the reverse. We once sat by the side of a coachman, when ascending the Catskill mountains, who struck us as being altogether superior to his calling. On our expressing, with some delicacy, our opinion that driving a coach was not exactly his forte, he told us that he had taken to it for health's sake. He

was a well known scientific citizen of Boston.

Mrs. Basford, tired as she was, stopped to look at the splendid teams, as, one after the other, they drove up to the Angel, and then came the thought where to seek lodging. She had a vivid recollection of the Crosdale adventure, and hesitated to ask anyone. At last she took the City-road, and at the top enquired from a little man on short wooden legs, and with a crossing-sweeper's broom in his hand, if he knew of any respectable place where she could get lodgings. The little man had been a big man in his time, but had had both his legs taken off at the thigh, by a round shot at the battle of Trafalgar, and thenceforth existed upon a pension and the claims on charity of two very short stumps, supported by two very short wooden legs. He was well known in the neighbourhood as "Billy Stumps." Many who had a spare halfpenny would bestow it upon him, and receive hearty thanks.

Stumps was a fat,good-hearted,merry being, and his only fault was too great addiction to grog; and whenever he got too much on board he felt it impossible to steady himself upon the wooden legs, and rolled down hill to his home and wife.

In reply to Mrs. Basford, he said that his "missus" had nice lodgings to let, and, happening on that occasion to be sober, he went with her to show her the way. When Mrs. Basford saw the tidy little woman who called Stumps husband, and the tidy little apartments, she was satisfied that it was a respectable place, and she at once arranged to stay there. Mrs. Stumps explained her husband's proclivities, but said he was a worthy man, and brought home all his halfpennies, except very occasionally, when the grog was on board, and that then she took him up in her arms, and put him to bed, and unfastened his wooden legs to prevent his getting up again and doing mischief.

CHAPTER XII.

TWO LETTERS.

On the morning on which Mrs. Folliot's letter to Mr. Henry was delivered at the Regent, Mr. Henry and Miss Vandaleur passed the hall table, as usual, on their way to breakfast. The latter did not expect any letters, but, with that laudable desire for information which distinguishes the sex, she could not avoid casting her eye over the letters ranged on the table, waiting for claimants. "To Henry de Noel, Esquire, The Regent, Buxton. (Private)," in female handwriting, caught her eye. The letter was instantly transferred to her pocket, unnoticed by Mr. Henry.

Miss Vandaleur was remarkably lively at breakfast. She told Mr. Brown more Irish stories, and that gentleman laughed so much that he upset his coffee, and was

reproved by his wife. Sir Charles Veysey, always punctual at dinner, took the breakfast hour very leisurely, and was usually silent, and almost repulsed any attempt at conversation. Stevens placed his coffee and table-napkin before him, and asked what he would take.

"A new laid egg, a trout, if caught this morning, and a devilled kidney," replied Sir Charles, and buried himself in the perusal of "The Courier" and his letters, and even Miss Vandaleur dare not interrupt him.

She sat longer than usual at the breakfast table, having a chat with Mrs. Brown, whilst Mr. Henry and Mr. Brown strolled into the grounds. The acquaintance between the two had ripened into friendship, and each appreciated the special features of the other's character. Mr. Henry, as he listened to Mr. Brown's description of his fortunate ventures, whereby he had piled up colossal wealth, wished that he had been brought up to trade; and Mr. Brown, as he listened to

Mr. Henry's courtly language, and marked his gentlemanly bearing, wished that he had been brought up a gentleman. And Miss Vandaleur and Mrs. Brown in like manner became friends. Miss Vandaleur sighed as Mrs. Brown appeared in one new dress after another, all of the most expensive kind, and Mrs. Brown longed for the taste which enabled Miss Vandaleur always to look nice, and in the fashion, with materials not to be compared in price with Mrs. Brown's.

Sir Charles retained his seat longer than usual, and Miss Vandaleur finding that if she remained she would be left alone with Sir Charles, whispered to Stevens as he passed her that she wanted particularly to speak to Sir Charles, and that she was going on to the lawn.

When Sir Charles rose from the table Stevens gave him Miss Vandaleur's message, on which he exclaimed, "A woman, a woman again!" and calling for his writing-case, locked up his letters, and strode through the glass window on to the lawn.

There he found Miss Vandaleur walking to and fro. "Sir Charles," she said, "you have had so much trouble already that I am ashamed to trouble you further, but perhaps you will not object to advise me once more. I picked off the hall table this morning a letter addressed to Mr. Henry—here it is—you see it is in a lady's handwriting, and has the Matlock post-mark. I think that there can be no doubt that it is from that Mrs. Folliot. I said nothing to Mr. Henry, and thought that I would consult you before I delivered it to him, if you will kindly permit me to do so. I fear you will say that what I have done is scarcely right; but I do feel that at Mr. Henry's age it is downright cruelty to torment him with such a letter as I think it likely this is—what should I do? Should I open it?"

"My dear Madam," said Sir Charles, "as you seek my advice I cannot withhold it. With regard to opening the letter I don't think that you would be justified in doing so.

I am not one of those who hold that we may do evil that good may come, even for the sake of our dearest friend. The friend, though accepting the benefit, might condemn the means, and shun you afterwards. In this case there is no question in my mind as to the right course to adopt. You should, I think, hand the letter to Mr. Henry, and not appear in the least degree aware who is the writer. I think that what I have said to him has placed him on his guard, and, old as he is, he is by no means deficient in shrewdness, and above all he may be depended upon to act like a gentleman, and that is incumbent on all of us, even if the person who is the object of it be utterly worthless."

Miss Vandaleur would have scorned the idea of acting meanly if the question were put to her—Will you do a mean act? And so would nine hundred and ninety-nine women out of every thousand. But how is it that women do little acts of meanness without in the least seeing that they are mean?

We suppose we must attribute it to nature's laws. Achilles was invulnerable except in the heel, so we must arrive at the conclusion that woman is born with one weak point, and that is that she does not submit every proposition to the crucial test "would it be right?" As there are spots on the face of the sun, so there are spots in the formation of the being who is the great delight of man. Let us look gently upon the stains, and try to blot them out.

Miss Vandaleur felt the force of Sir Charles Veysey's observations, and the crimson came to her cheeks, and for a minute or two fought desperately with "the bloom of Ninon" for mastery. Recovering her composure she said,—

"Sir Charles, you are very kind to give me such good advice, all women, you know, are impulsive, but Irishwomen are doubly so. Pray forget that I ever suggested such a thing as opening the letter. It was wrong, I know it was, and I regret suggesting it

I will take the letter to Mr. Henry at once."

Thereupon Miss Vandaleur sought Mr. Henry, whom she found sitting at the foot of that financial Gamaliel, Mr. Brown, and listening with eager ears to the prescription of the latter for making cent. per cent.

"Cousin Henry," she said, "I have found this letter on the hall table;" and handing it to him turned to Mr. Brown, whose last observation on the wonderful power of gold had been made in time for her to hear it. "Faith," said Miss Vandaleur, "it's such as you we want in Ireland. Our bogs are the coverings of mines of gold and silver—my father often told me so—and that if anybody will dig deep enough he'll find them to a certainty."

On receiving the letter, Mr. Henry did as many of us do. He carefully examined the outside before breaking it open. He saw that the handwriting was feminine, and spent a good quarter of an hour in guessing who it was from. He knew that it was not from

Mrs. Robert. Then who could it be from? It was not from Mrs. Moore, as the handwriting was too good. Giving up speculating upon the latter, he turned to the post-mark. "Matlock!" he exclaimed, "do I know any body at Matlock?" and having spent another quarter of an hour upon that interesting question, he proceeded to open it. Oh! that dreadful half-hour to Miss Vandaleur, it seemed an age. To be on the borders of a very interesting discovery, and yet not discover it. Horrid suspense! During this interval, Mr. Brown had endeavoured to extract from Miss Vandaleur her reasons for believing that Irish bogs covered mines of gold and silver. It is astonishing that those who have toiled to heap up riches are the most credulous beings in the world in the matter of disposing of those riches. "Why should not," Mr. Brown argued in his own mind, "bogs cover mines of untold productiveness. Were not the finest diamonds, the purest emeralds, the most unalloyed gold and silver,

found in the most deserted and uncultivated districts." Mr. Brown took out the memorandum book which he always carried in his pocket, and asked Miss Vandaleur if she knew of any mineral agent in Dublin whom he could consult, and Miss Vandaleur mentioned the name of an extensive dealer in articles made from Irish bog-oak.

But Miss Vandaleur was ill at ease until she could know something about the contents of the letter, and though her conversation was directed to Mr. Brown, she had an eye on Mr. Henry and the letter. At last Mr. Henry opened the letter. He thought aloud. Looking at the signature first, he said, "Oh! Mrs. Folliot, Amelia is her christian name," and then put down the letter to consider what females named "Amelia" he had met with in his lifetime. Miss Vandaleur was ready to snatch up the letter and read it for him. After concluding that he had never met with an

"Amelia" before, he proceeded to read; and as he thought aloud we need scarcely say that he read aloud. He read the address, and then put down the letter to digest it. "Ivy Cottage Hotel must be a pretty place," he said. "Very pretty indeed for some people's purposes," exclaimed Miss Vandaleur, in an excited undertone. As Mr. Henry proceeded with the reading of the letter the comments of Miss Vandaleur were numerous and varied, and when he arrived at the postcript, her indignation was boundless, "two snug, rooms indeed! I'll have the woman turned out of both," she said.

Mr. Henry rose from the garden seat, on which he had located himself to read Mrs. Folliot's letter, and, perfectly unconscious that its contents were known to both Miss Vandaleur and Mr. Brown, said to the former, "I have received an important letter, and should like to see Sir Charles Veysey; do you know where he is?"

"You will find him, Cousin," said Miss Vandaleur "on his usual beat."

Mr. Henry went there, and found Sir Charles walking about in a brown study. Mr. Henry's faith in the immaculate character of woman-kind was so strong that it was scarcely shaken by the letter, and by the opinion as to Mrs. Folliot's real character, which Sir Charles had expressed to him. "My dear Sir Charles," said Mr. Henry, placing the letter in his hand, "what do you think of this?"

"Think of it," said Sir Charles, after reading it, "Why, I think that she is a cunning, designing woman, and would, if you let her, play the devil with you. My dear Sir, take my advice, and return the letter along with the pocket-handkerchief, which has been lying in one of the drawers in my bedroom since you gave it to me."

"Cousin," said Miss Vandaleur, who at that moment came up, "pray be guided by Sir Charles, he has seen more of the world

than you, and let me return the letter and handkerchief to Mrs. Folliot." Mr. Henry concurred in this, and handed the letter to Miss Vandaleur, and Sir Charles told Stevens to take the handkerchief to Miss Vandaleur's room.

Oh, the delight with which Miss Vandaleur enclosed the letter in the pocket-handkerchief, and made them both into a parcel, and addressed it to "Mrs. Folliot, Ivy Cottage Hotel, Matlock" purposely omitting the title of "Honourable."

After this little episode was over Mr. Henry enjoyed freedom from anxiety. By a tacit understanding he and Sir Charles met every morning after breakfast for a short constitutional, and their respect for each other daily increased. The old gentleman interested Sir Charles with the reminiscences of his early days, which took him back to the time when the population of England and Wales was barely six millions; the days of the battle of Dettin-

gen and of Anson's return from his long cruise with 32 waggon loads of treasure, captured from the Spaniards; the days when Wolfe died on the battle-field, leaving his memory enshrined with glory, and Byng died the death of a coward, though many said that he was not less brave than Wolfe.

Sir Charles noticed that whenever Mr. Henry introduced the name of King George III. he took off his hat.

And Sir Charles told with the modesty which a true soldier ever shows, stories of some of the desperate fights in which he received his many wounds; and Mr. Henry would get so excited over the narrative that his gold-headed cane swept away the ends of branches and lopped off the tops of flowers, as if he were cutting down Napoleon's cuirassiers by the dozen.

What with the genial companionship of Sir Charles, the lively chatter of Miss Vandaleur, the gold-tinged stories of Mr. Brown, the mountain air, and the excellent living

at the hotel, Mr. Henry was fast regaining the strength he had lost; when one morning Miss Vandaleur saw on the hall table a letter with a deep black edge, addressed to Mr. Henry in the handwriting of Mr. Robert.

A cold shiver went through her frame. "Was it," she asked herself, "a death missive telling that at last one so beloved as Mrs. Robert had been taken from this world to another and better?" She dare not tell Mr. Henry suddenly what she suspected.

She took up the letter, and hurried to her own room, and looking again and again at the address, she saw that the writer's hand had trembled when he penned it. "How can I," she said to herself, "break the news to the dear old man? It will almost kill him."

So, after a plentiful fit of crying, she sought Sir Charles Veysey, who discerned at once that some great sorrow had fallen upon her. She took his proffered hand and said, "Oh! Sir Charles, I fear this letter," handing it to him, "contains the dreadful

news of the death of Mr. Henry's cousin, Mrs. Robert, of whom you have so often heard him speak in terms of affection. I can't give it to him, we should be like two children weeping together, will you kindly do so, and help him to bear the blow."

She saw Mr. Henry approaching for his morning walk with Sir Charles, and disappeared.

Sir Charles would rather have met a charge of cavalry than Mr. Henry, and his face bore the mark of anxiety, so much so that Mr. Henry observed it and said, "Nothing wrong, Sir Charles, I hope?"

"Not exactly—that is to say, nothing relating to myself; but I have news that a friend, whom I greatly esteem, has suffered a severe loss in the death of a female relative for whom he had a great affection;" and as he said this he looked Mr. Henry in the face to see if he took the hint, but Mr. Henry's unsophisticated mind received not the least impression that he himself

was the one referred to; and he observed that the death of a good woman was a public loss, for did she not diffuse a halo of happiness wherever she went, and that what he should do if his dear cousin Mrs. Robert were to die he did not know.

Sir Charles offered his arm to Mr. Henry, and after being silent for a moment he said, "My dear Sir, is it not a pleasure to be able to think that those who pass away from us leave their halo of happiness behind them?"

Mr. Henry thought of his dear sister, and said, "It is indeed, Sir Charles, and when I think of my dear sister,"—

"My dear Sir," said Sir Charles, solemnly, "I think now of your dear Cousin, for she is, I fear"—handing him the letter.

"Dead!" gasped Mr. Henry, "dead!" and Sir Charles had to help him to a garden seat. "Pray read it to me," he said, returning Sir Charles the letter.

The latter read the few lines which an-

nounced the fact, and which terminated with the words, "I cannot say more—my heart is breaking." Sir Charles rose from the seat, and left the good old man to expend his grief alone, carefully watching him from a distance that he might render assistance if necessary; and when Mr. Henry rose from his seat and proceeded towards the house, Sir Charles was instantly at his side and assisted him to his room.

Neither Mr. Henry nor Miss Vandaleur appeared in public that evening. Sir Charles was silent, and the other guests, learning the reason why they did not appear, felt low themselves, and the piano was left unopened, and all the household paid a silent tribute of respect for the grief of those who had made themselves much beloved.

The following morning Mr. Henry and Miss Vandaleur met on the landing at the usual hour, and Miss Vandaleur said, "We must not, Cousin, throw a gloom over the house by our melancholy looks. We are

better here until the day before the funeral, when we ought to leave, that you may be present. I have the mourning at home which I bought for my uncle's funeral, and you can write to your tailor at Lumechester. We are better out of the way, for the undertakers are in possession at the Close, as much as the bailiffs were when my father owed his steward nearly £1,000 and could not pay it." And whilst all the guests recognised the sorrow which the faces of Mr. Henry and Miss Vandaleur expressed, they appreciated the feelings of consideration for themselves which an abstinence from all outward shew of grief exhibited.

The day fixed for the departure of Mr. Henry and his cousin arrived, and the yellow carriage was brought to the door. Sir Charles gave his arm to Miss Vandaleur, followed by Mr. Henry, holding his hat in hand until he had taken leave of all the visitors. As Miss Vandaleur took Sir Charles's hand and said "Farewell," tears of gratitude stood

in her eyes, and Mr. Henry was so much moved that he could only grasp Sir Charles's hand but could not utter a word.

The journey home was made in sadness. Mr. Henry left Miss Vandaleur at her rooms in the Close, and then drove direct to Whicham. He had previously written to Mr. Robert a letter expressing, as far as his agitation would permit, his sorrow at the irreparable loss he had sustained, and that he would be present at the funeral.

And when that mournful event did take place, Mr. Henry's expression of grief was only second to that of Mr. Robert.

CHAPTER XIII.

A TRUE NOBLEMAN.

MOUNTED on his somewhat antiquated charger, Ebenezer rode up to the lodge gates of the Earl of Fitzallan. His long beard had collected the flying dust of forty miles of road, his wallet was strapped to his saddle bow, and he looked as if he belonged to a different hemisphere to that inhabited by the sprucely-dressed attendants under whose inspection and examination he had to pass. It was with difficulty that he gained admission through the lodge gates. What would have been his fate had he, unaided, been interviewed by the gorgeous yellow-plush who acted as hall-porter, it would have been difficult to predict. But he had passed through the gates a few minutes only when a labourer engaged in sweeping the leaves of the close-mown grass said to him, "Thou'd

better go aside a bit, his Lordship's coming," and, turning round, he saw a grey-headed gentleman on horseback approaching, followed by a groom. He was in hunting costume, and he and his horse gave tokens of a hard day's run, for both were covered with mud. Ebenezer drew up his horse at the side of the road, and, as the Earl passed, took off his hat. The latter looked at Ebenezer, and was struck with his patriarchal appearance.

"Do you want to see me" said the Earl, kindly. Ebenezer saying "Yes," he motioned to him to ride alongside.

The ride through the Park was sufficiently long to enable Ebenezer to open his case. The Earl listened attentively to his grievance respecting the invasion of his territory by the Lumechester runners, and looked incredulous at the claims which Ebenezer said had been recognized by the authorities.

"Well," he said, "I recollect the case of the King of the Isle of Man, and how

Pitt shut up his royal privileges, in spite of all his protestations, but your kingdom of Saint Peter's beats that hollow. Do you mean to say that you won't allow the constables recognized by law to arrest any one at Saint Peter's ?

"That is what I do say, Earl," replied Ebenezer, "and if I'd caught that Lumechester runner in my territories I would have put him in our prison, instead of his putting somebody in Lumechester prison."

At this point in the conversation they reached the hall door, and the Earl dismounted, the door was opened, and he bade Ebenezer follow him to his library.

"You have had a long journey, and must be both hungry and tired. Sit down, my friend," he said in a kind way, "and you shall have some refreshment, and whilst you take it I'll just jump into my bath for I've had a good deal of soft ground to go over. I'll be with you in half an hour."

Ringing the bell he ordered the servant to

bring in some refreshment, and opening a door passed into his dressing-room.

It was the first time that Ebenezer had entered the mansion of a nobleman, and he looked round the room with a feeling of curiosity. Against the wall hung a map shewing the Earl's estates, with all the roads and buildings marked upon it, and all the enclosures shewn, and described by a number.

The Earl was the *beau ideal* of a British peer. Above the middle height, but spare, with finely chiselled features, and the frank manner of a soldier (he had been one of Wellington's aides-de-camp and had passed through the Peninsular Campaign, and was at the Battle of Waterloo) and a heart as tender as a woman's—he was beloved by the whole county, and he loved the whole county.

A footman brought in a well-spread tray, and respectfully inquired what wine Ebenezer would wish in addition to the foaming tankard of ale on the tray.

"None, thank thee," said Ebenezer, and at once proceeded to attack the meal placed before him.

Before half an hour had elapsed the Earl, in his dressing-gown, made his appearance, and Ebenezer, having satisfied his appetite, the Earl placed a chair at the table for himself and another for Ebenezer.

"Now to business," and looking at the clock, he said, "I must leave you in an hour, as I have some friends in the house and we dine at eight."

"Earl" said Ebenezer, "I come to ask thee to right us folks at Saint Peter's; I have told thee of the Lumechester runner, but I'm coming to something more now. Thou know'st that water, like air, is a necessity for man, and we have at Saint Peter's a supply which is no more than what we want, and which God and nature have given us for ourselves, and nobody else, and which we intend to keep, and will shed our blood

to keep. Now those Crosdale manufacturers have sent their men with poles, and goodness knows what else to our village, to make what they call a plan, and something else which I don't understand, and they are going to bring a Bill into Parliament to take away the water which we have used ever since I can recollect anything, and sell it at Crosdale. Now, Earl, as I rode through your big park, I saw your beautiful trees, and spied in the distance a nice bit of water. What would you say if some engineering fellows were to come some fine day and say they wanted to fell your trees, and take your water for somebody some miles off? I think that you would say as I say, if you want trees and water get them at home, and don't come stealing other people's."

The Earl was much more struck with this part of Ebenezer's case than he was with the police part, and said, "This seems really too bad. They must shew that they can't

get water at home, before they ought to be allowed to take yours, but really the townspeople make out so strong a case about this water question that they carry committees of Parliament with them, and as they have plenty of money at their command, I mean public money, they overpower the country people who have not the means of fighting the question,—and let me tell you that a Parliamentary fight is no joke, for counsels' fees are frightfully heavy, and everything else is on a big scale. It would almost ruin your little village to embark in such a venture, and yet without doing so I can scarcely see how you can protect yourselves."

Ebenezer's countenance fell. He was under the impression that the great Earl could stop the Bill with a word. "What is to be done?" he asked.

After a moment's consideration, the Earl replied,—"I think that it is a case for the Chairman of Committees in our

House. He has great power, and he takes under his care, I believe, those cases in which the injustice is palpable —and I think it is so in this case— and the injured parties have not the means of appearing in Committee. I will get you an opportunity of stating your objections to him, but of course it would not be proper for me to urge my own opinion upon him, nor would he submit to it. Can I say anything more to the purpose?"

"Earl," said Ebenezer, "I thank thee, I will consult with my deacons, and if they agree with me we three will go up to London when Parliament meets, and ask thee to aid us, and so I bid thee farewell," extending his hand.

The Earl took the honest man's hand, and did not think his own dishonoured by the touch.

Ebenezer was on the point of leaving the room when the Earl said, "You have

come a long distance and cannot possibly return to-night—you must stay here, I can't think of your being on the road at midnight and he rang the bell. "Tell the house-steward," he said, "to let this gentleman have a bed here to-night and receive every attention in the steward's room."

The winter was now approaching, and fog had begun to cast a leaden mantle over the land. A witty French writer once observed, "In England there are three hundred and sixty-five nights in the year," and nobody can deny the truism enveloped in sarcasm.

Parliament was to meet in January, and Ebenezer and the two deacons determined to be in London by the opening of the House. As expense was an object, they resolved to drive all the way in Ebenezer's light cart, and give themselves plenty of time to do it in, and as none of the three had been in London, and the depth of winter was a dull time for work of any

kind at Saint Peter's, they could unite pleasure and business.

Accordingly, after making arrangements for the management of affairs at Saint Peter's, the three started on their journey, stopping for a day or two at the large towns, such as Lumechester and Birmingham, and reaching London at the end of December. In a day or two after their arrival, they called at the town residence of the Earl of Fitzallan, but all the shutters were put to, and at first they thought that the Earl was dead, and were sometime before they could make up their minds to knock at the door, when they were greatly relieved by being told that the Earl and all the family were in the country, and would not be in town until the opening of Parliament, when he could be seen, but not before.

They had taken plain apartments at Islington, which was then a pleasing suburb of London, and, after Ebenezer's horse had

recovered from the fatigue of the long journey, they utilised him by going about in the light cart and seeing the sights. Ebenezer and his deacons' great delight was to spend an hour or two in Saint Paul's or Westminster Abbey.

They were attracted not only by the services, but also by the monuments to great men which they contained, until they became well known to the officials and officiating clergy, who said many kind words to them, and gave orders that convenient seats should always be found for them during the service.

The three tall figures of the mountaineers, especially that of Ebenezer, enhanced by his long flowing beard, were quite a feature in the venerable edifices, and harmonised with their character; and as the anthem, given with all the power of the splendid organ and choral accompaniment, sounded through the building, the three patriarchs stood entranced. They had been accustomed to

consider the grand ceremonials of the Church of England as relics of Papacy, but they admitted to each other at last, that they uplifted the soul and brought man nearer to his Creator.

Ebenezer and his friends had been at Islington about a fortnight when one morning, on passing "The Angel," they met Mrs. Basford, who had been more than a month in London. The surprise was great on both sides, but to Mrs. Basford it was a comfort and satisfaction.

She had met with great difficulties and much discouragement in her endeavours to get her case before the proper authorities.

The worthy Alderman Sir Carpenter Whytebate received her kindly, and said that the letter she brought from Mr. Robert would of itself command his best attention. He went fully into the circumstances of the case, but when he saw the letter from the Home Secretary he expressed his doubt whether any influence, however great, would have the

least effect, but he said that he would make an effort. Sir Carpenter had filled the office of Lord Mayor with much dignity and ability, and unbounded hospitality, and had often received the Home Secretary at the Mansion House, and had been thrown into contact with him on matters relating to Corporation business.

"You are staying in London, I suppose?" he said to Mrs. Basford.

"Yes Sir," she replied, and handed him her address, adding,—

"You see, Sir, I must put up where they don't ask much money, for I shall want all I can save to pay for Richard's defence."

"No doubt," he said, "and it would be best, perhaps, that as this address is out of the way you should, if asked for it, say 'To the care of Sir Carpenter Whytebate, Lombard-st., London,' and I will forward any letters to you. I will write down the address for you.'

The following day Sir Carpenter drove to the Home Office in Whitehall, and gave his

card to the hall-porter. The latter, reading it, said, "His lordship is not in town, and we don't expect him until Parliament meets."

Sir Carpenter expected this answer, and knew there was no alternative but to wait until then. As to writing to his lordship's secretary, he felt that the letter would be replied to in the same strain as the former reply. He wrote a kind note to Mrs. Basford, telling her that the Home Secretary being out of town, nothing could be done until his return, and that he would ascertain when that took place and endeavour to see him.

So poor anxious Mrs. Basford could do nothing but wait in patience, and it was a great comfort to her when she could go to Ebenezer's lodgings and talk to him about the matter; and he and his companions did all in their power to soothe her, and took her sometimes with them when they went sight-seeing.

At last the day arrived for the opening of Parliament. The Regent had not for many years opened Parliament in person, and the

uninteresting ceremony of doing so by Royal Commission was adopted. The announcement of the opening of Parliament falls dull and lifeless on the ear, unless coupled with the intelligence that the Sovereign will open it in person.

On the morning after Parliament opened Ebenezer and his two deacons presented themselves at the town mansion of the Earl in St. James's-square, and the tall porter looked at them inquisitively.

"Are you known to his lordship?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Ebenezer, "the Earl received me at Ferndale Park, and asked me to see him here when Parliament opened, and it opened yesterday, and so we are here."

The porter gave the names of Ebenezer and his two friends to the Earl's "gentleman," and after a few minutes' absence the latter asked them to follow him. He took them some distance down a broad passage

abounding in pictures and statuary, and then, turning to the left, led them down a narrow passage, and opening a door, said,— "Mr. Thorneycroft and friends, my lord," and as they entered closed the door.

The Earl was seated at a large writing-table, on which stood numerous bundles of papers neatly tied up with red tape, and several volumes of Blue-books. He rose and held out his hand to each, and bade them be seated.

Then, sitting down, he turned to Ebenezer and said, "I have already enquired if Lord Arrowcliffe, our Chairman of Committees, is in town, and I understand that he is, and will be in his room at the House of Lords this afternoon at four o'clock. So if you can make it convenient to meet me there, punctually at four, we will see if he will grant us an interview. There, I have written it down for you, 'Lord Arrowcliffe's rooms, House of Lords, at four, punctually.' Any of the messengers about the House

will show you the way. So good-bye till then."

"We thank thee, Earl, very much indeed, you may count on our being there," said Ebenezer, and they left the room.

Lord Arrowcliffe was one of the celebrities of the day, he was almost omnipotent in private bill business. He wielded his power with the greatest ability and impartiality. Any attempt to influence his judgment met with a stern rebuff. He by no means used mincing terms, in fact his language was as strong as his determination. The deputation were at the appointed place nearly half-an-hour before the time fixed, and Lord Arrowcliffe's courteous secretary asked them, as he passed them on going from his lordship's room to the committee clerk's room, if they were waiting to see his lordship, and on Ebenezer replying that they were waiting, by appointment with the Earl of Fitzallan, to see his lordship, said, "I'm glad I asked you, because

I will tell his lordship, who is now in his room. Stand here and don't leave."

Punctual to the minute the Earl arrived, and, giving a nod of recognition to Ebenezer and his friends as they raised their hats, he gave his card to the messenger in attendance. The latter took it into the room, and returning, said,—

"Lord Arrowcliffe will be most happy to see you, my lord," and shewed him in.

Lord Arrowcliffe was seated in his arm chair, and rose and shaking hands, said, "What is it, Fitzallan?"

"I called about a private Bill," replied the Earl, "which appears to me to tell very harshly upon a peaceful out-of-the-way little community of labouring men, living at a place amongst our Yorkshire hills, called Saint Peter's in the Rocks, a village little known, and it is only by repute that I know anything of it myself. It is governed in a very primitive style by a worthy man named Ebenezer Thorneycroft,

a kind of patriarch. He tells me—but he is outside and will speak for himself—that Crosdale, a large manufacturing town some miles off, is trying, by a Bill now in Parliament, to take a spring, the only water supply the villagers have, and which they naturally wish to retain—but if you have no objection the deputation now outside had better tell their own tale."

"Give me down the Crosdale Water Bill," said Lord Arrowcliffe to his secretary. The latter, taking down the Bill from amongst a number on a shelf, handed it to his lordship, who turned over the leaves. "Power to take and appropriate the waters of a spring at Saint Peter's in the Rocks." "That's it," said his lordship, and taking his pen he made a broad vertical line in the margin from the beginning to the end of the clause, and then added "Qy." "Call the deputation in," he said to his secretary, and they entered.

"Well, my men," said Lord Arrowcliffe,

in a blunt way, very different to the Earl's, "what do you want?"

Ebenezer looked at Earl Fitzallan as much as to say. "You had better tell him."

The Earl understood the look and said, "No, tell your own tale, as you told it to me, his lordship will hear you."

Then Ebenezer, in his own simple manly way, told his story, begining with his ordering off the surveyors.

"Have you not got wells and pumps?" asked his lordship.

"Not a well or a pump in the whole village," replied Ebenezer.

"How far is Crosdale from you?" said the Chairman.

"About ten miles," replied Ebenezer, "and there's plenty of water thereabouts, if they will try for it."

"Strike out the clause," said Lord Arrowcliffe to his secretary, "they've got other places in their Bill, and I'll be d—— if they shall have this."

The Earl laughed heartily at the Chairman's strong expression of opinion, and motioning to the deputation they left him with the Chairman.

"I am glad," he said to Lord Arrowcliffe, "that there is some one to uphold the right of the labouring man, and I thank you much for giving them a hearing." Then shaking hands he left the room. Going to Ebenezer in the passage, he said,—

"It will be advisable for you not to leave London at present. The promoters are sure to have their say to Lord Arrowcliffe, and he may want to see you again. As you have not been to any Parliamentary agent you had better leave your address with the secretary; but I dont think that any amount of persuasion will turn Lord Arrowcliffe; so good bye, and if you want me further let me know."

Ebenezer wrote down his address, and sent it into the secretary by the messenger, and the latter returned, saying, "Quite right."

The secretary, the following day, returned

the Bill to the agent with the clause respecting Saint Peter's spring struck out. Great was the indignation at Crosdale, when the water supply they most coveted was thus threatened to be snatched from their grasp. The commissioners moved heaven and earth to get it restored. They sent a deputation to the lord-lieutenant of their own county, and they beat about for members of Parliament to assist them, and when all their plans were matured, the agent for the Bill waited upon Lord Arrowcliffe, and asked him if he would receive a deputation in support of the Bill as introduced, which he consented to do.

At the time appointed a deputation consisting of Peers, and Members of the House of Commons, and of commissioners and others connected with Crosdale, entered his lordship's room, to the number of about twenty-five.

His lordship gave a surprised and somewhat indignant look at the assemblage.

"Lord Arrowcliffe," said the Lord Lieu-

tenant of the County of Lancaster, " I have come with these gentlemen, who are interested in the Crosdale Water Bill, to introduce them and vouch for their respectability, but I know nothing of the case myself and must leave them to explain it."

" Go on then, " said Lord Arrowcliffe, gruffly. Thereupon a stiff, prim-looking member of the House of Commons, whose name was on the back of the Bill, stepped forward and addressed his lordship in support of it.

His lordship's face grew blacker and blacker as he proceeded, and at last the speaker caused the thundercloud to burst by telling him that if the Bill went back to Crosdale as altered, it " would be a most unpopular measure. "

" What's that, my man, you say ?" exclaimed Lord Arrowcliffe, " what you mean is that I shall be unpopular at Crosdale. You may go back to Crosdale and burn me in effigy first, and go to h—— afterwards."

The effect was magical, the rush to the

door was instantaneous, and, excepting one peer well known for his versatile talent as a statesman and lawyer, who remained behind, and roared with laughter, they all disappeared, and Lord Arrowcliffe turned to him and said in a voice of thunder, "What the d—— are you laughing at?"

The Bill passed, but with the clause authorizing the taking of the Saint Peter's water struck out.

Sir Chapman Whytebate took an early opportunity after the opening of Parliament to call upon the Home Secretary.

On sending in his card he was cordially received, and his lordship asked his secretary to bring him the papers relating to the case, and, having glanced over them, asked,—

"Is there anything new in the case?"

"I can't say," said Sir Chapman, "that there is, only that I may add that, judging from this letter received a day or two ago, the man's character stands the higher the longer he is in prison."

The Home Secretary read it. It was from the Governor of the Gaol to Mr. Robert, and then he said, "I'm afraid I can't help you, the case must take its course." Sir Chapman wrote informing Mrs. Basford of the result, and the latter determined to return home. She was making arrangements accordingly, when the wife of Billy Stumps entered the house, carrying her husband in her arms. Billy had rolled part of the way home to get to bed, as he had met with an old messmate, and was no longer in a position to come home perpendicularly, when his wife saw him and took him up, and at once put him to bed and unfastened his wooden legs.

After a night's rest Stumps was able to narrate the events of the previous day, which amounted to this: that an old messmate had come up to London to get justice done to him about his pension, which, for some reason that he could not understand, had been stopped; and after being turned away from the Admi-

ralty, and told not to come there again, he was at his wits' end what to do, when he thought he would put himself in the way of the Duke of Clarence in whose ship he had served. So he waited about the entrance to the House of Lords for some days until he saw the Duke, who came on foot to hear a debate on some naval matters.

"Help an old shipmate, your Royal Highness," said Jack, holding his cap in his left hand, whilst he extended his right with a petition in it.

His Royal Highness looked at Jack, and recollected him at once, and taking the petition glanced over it. "I can't stay now, but be at the entrance to the Admiralty at twelve to-morrow, and I will be there and see about this."

"God bless your Royal Highness," said Jack, "you were always the poor sailors' friend, I'll be there." Jack was at the entrance to the Admiralty at the time appointed, and as the Duke's carriage drove up, he gave Jack a kind

look of recognition. The Duke returned to his carriage in about half-an-hour, and as Jack stood, cap in hand, the former said "I have made it all right. There was some misunderstanding. So go home and be happy. You will have a letter from here in a day or two."

Jack was on his way to catch the coach at the Angel, and meeting Stumps, he treated him and himself to such copious potations of grog, that had he not been a sailor he could not have got on to the coach and kept there.

The story considerably impressed Mrs. Basford, and she reverted to an idea of placing a petition in the hands of one of the Princesses. She mentioned this to Stumps, who became enthusiastic on the subject, and offered to go with her to Windsor. His wife fell into the idea, and agreed to entrust her with the care of her husband and the wooden legs, and initiated her into the mystery of taking them off.

Stumps had been A.B. on board Lord Nelson's ship at Trafalgar, and had his medal and his old rig-out, which he kept in a state of preservation, carefully put by in a drawer, and periodically brushed and aired. Getting his wife to shorten the legs of his trousers to his altered conditions, Stumps arrayed himself in his former garments, and fastened the medal to his breast. Mrs. Basford and he started by the Windsor coach on the Saturday afternoon, as they understood that Sunday was the day on which the Royal Family walked in public on the terrace.

On the following day Mrs. Basford and Stumps went to the Terrace. Morning service in Saint George's Chapel had just been concluded, and the members of the Royal Family promenaded the terrace, the bystanders looking on respectfully, and keeping at a proper distance. Suddenly a little man on wooden legs, in sailor's dress, and with a war medal on his breast, advanced

two or three paces from the line of spectators, dragging forward a half-fainting woman with a paper in her hand. One of the Princesses stopped, and saying, "Poor woman!" took it from her and gave it to one of the attendants, whilst Stumps, with a face expressive of satisfaction at his own performance, stood cap in hand for a moment, and then retired to the line of spectators, drawing Mrs. Basford after him.

Poor Mrs. Basford stayed another week in the hope of receiving some reply to her petition, and finding none, decided to return home.

She went to say good-bye to Ebenezer, and was greatly pleased when he said that he and his friends had accomplished what they came for, and were going home the next day but one, and that they would make room for her in the light cart, even if they got out and walked every now and then to ease the horse.

CHAPTER XIV.

WESTWARD HO!

Mr. Henry returned to his bachelor quarters at Whicham, and Miss Vandaleur returned to her apartments in the Close, and they both felt that one of those dear ties which bind man to earth had been severed.

Mr. Henry had brought with him from the Close a portrait of Mrs. Robert, which he placed underneath that of his dear sister; and Joseph found him, oftener than he thought good for him, looking at the two portraits; and so much was he absorbed at times that he made no answer to Joseph's "Dinner served, Sir," and he was obliged to attract his attention by gently placing his hand on his shoulder. And then the good old gentleman would jump up from his chair, and shew great signs of vigour, and precede Joseph into the library as if nothing was

the matter. But the latter observed that on these occasions the first use he made of the table napkin was to wipe away the moisture from his eyes. And Joseph was sent oftener than he liked upon the "Spotted Deer" cob to enquire after Mr. Robert's health, and how Master Lawrie and the other children were, and on his return after one of these journeys he announced to Mr. Henry that a lady house-keeper had been installed at Mr. Robert's house.

Mr. Henry naturally enquired "What is her name, and what is she like?"

The former question Joseph readily answered by saying, "Peggington."

"Singular name," observed Mr. Henry. "Is she short and stout or tall and thin?"

She's betwixt and between," said Joseph, "she's got an awful umbrella, nearly as big as herself, and it has a standing place in the hall to itself."

"What sort of a looking person is she," said Mr. Henry, "I mean in her face."

"Well," said Joseph, "she's got a row of black curls on each side of her face. They are her own, because she's paid for them."

"God bless me," said Mr. Henry, "she is a peculiar person."

"I should think she was," said Joseph, "She's no more like poor Mrs. Robert than I am, and she do take to lecturing the servants, and old nurse won't stand it, and is going, and Miss Vandaleur has been once, and won't come in again, and Master Lawrie hides away from her, and cries all day."

"Oh dear! oh dear," said Mr. Henry, "this is sad." And he thought of sending for Lawrie to stay with him for a time, but then he considered that would scarcely do. It was winter, and it would be impossible to keep him indoors, and he might catch colds, sore throats, and what not. And besides, he felt himself not so strong since his accident, and that he needed much more attendance than before; and much as he would have wished Lawrie to be with him, he felt it

too great a charge, and it was a relief to his mind when he heard that Lawrie was going to Mr. Godwin's, as he felt certain that there he would be taken care of, and meet with affection.

Soon after Mrs. Roberts death, Mr. Godwin wrote and offered to take charge of Lawrie and educate him ; but for a time Mr. Robert did not like to part with him. Miss Peggington had, however, a great many complaints to prefer against him for making a noise in the house, and for putting her at defiance, and said that he was aided and abetted in all his evil ways by his old nurse, and threw out a hint that either he must be sent to school, and his nurse dismissed, or she would be compelled to leave.

Now Mr. Robert had been sorely teased and troubled to select a proper person to take charge of his household, and he could find no one so suitable in point of character as Miss Peggington. She was about his own age, and was a distant relation (a fourth or fifth

cousin). She was an old maid, and her father, whose house she had kept, had recently died, and left her a little property valued at about £1,000. So under all circumstances he thought he might do worse, and he invited her to take charge of his house. She was a hard-featured, ungenerous woman, and carefully looked to No. 1, and after No. 1 she looked to Mr. Robert as No. 2. It was edifying to see her follow suit to Mr. Robert on all occasions. If he took up his Bible, so did Miss Peggington; if he laid his down, Miss Peggington laid hers down. She was very devout at morning and evening prayers, and repeated the "Amen" with becoming emphasis; and if Mr. Robert pitched the tune of a hymn Miss Peggington would take it up, and, with shakes, which, if not artistic, were at least attempts at the artistic, would follow him perseveringly through the allotted number of verses.

But Mr. Godwin, charitable as he was,

disliked her; Miss Vandaleur hated her; Mrs. Smyley could not be civil to her; the children did not take to her; and finally, all the rest of the establishment were at variance with her. But Mr. Robert, who had become more and more engaged in business, as if to make up for the want of his wife's society, did not see all this, and the woman went on with her designing ways, fawning on those who were strong, and tyrannising over those who, like Lawrie, were weak, so that the house was not like the same.

At last Mr. Robert wrote to his brother-in-law, and accepted his offer to take charge of Lawrie, and the little fellow left the Close with a light heart, and arrived by coach at Severnworth, and was received by his uncle and aunt with sincere affection, and treated like one of their own children. But he felt the penalty of wearing long brown curls, for the other boys called him a girl, and, as his brother Will had early initiated him in the "noble art of self defence," he became

engaged in so many fistic encounters with the younger lads that his life was quite a burden to him. One day he played truant, and going into the Upper Town walked into a hairdresser's shop, and majestically requested that his curls might be cut off. The knight of the razor enquired whether his mother had sent him. "Never mind," said Lawrie, "about my mother sending me—here is my sixpence, and now cut my curls off," which the barber did, and Lawrie sat down to dinner denuded of the curls which had been his poor mother's delight and which his aunt highly prized.

He grew up a manly, high-spirited boy, and held his own whether in the class or the play-ground. After five years at Severnworth he was placed under the charge of one of the finest classical scholars in England, and carried off at eleven a silver medal, over the heads of several who were many years older, and at thirteen won the first prize medal as *dux prima classis.*

And what became of Mr. Henry? Shortly after Lawrie was sent to Severnworth he began to sink rapidly, and Joseph noticed that he sat by the hour together, day after day, gazing on the portraits of his sister and Mrs. Robert. To Joseph's suggestion that he should call in a doctor he opposed a most determined veto; and when Joseph, after a private consultation with the village doctor, put a couple of pills into his sago gruel, as a skilful and justifiable stratagem, the old gentleman, suspecting mischief, fished them both out with a spoon, and then dashed the basin and its contents at the head of the astonished Joseph. And at last he was confined entirely to his bed, and he had the portraits of those whom he loved so well brought into his bedroom, and hung so that he could always look upon them, and muttering, "Lord have mercy upon us miserable sinners," he yielded up that noble and generous spirit to Him who implanted it within his breast.

And Miss Vandaleur was not long in following her two cousins. She gave directions that she should be placed in her coffin in her most becoming dress, with her jewellery, as in life. And having thus tolled the funeral bell let us turn to more joyous sounds.

Good King George III. died on the 29th of January, 1820, and "the finest gentleman in Europe" ascended the Throne.

The nation forgot all his peccadillos, great and small, and he was crowned with unexampled pomp. Soon after his ascending the Throne he issued an amnesty to all prisoners confined for merely political offences, and Richard Basford was released from gaol.

He had set his mind upon emigrating to America, and Mary, with willing hand, helped him in his arrangements.

What are those joyous sounds which echo amidst the rocks of Saint Peter's?

It is a double event. Ebenezer makes his triumphal entry into Saint Peter's after defeating the Crosdale people, and Ephraim Norman and Rachel are married.

And what became of Jem, and how fared his love for Lilian? When he received the further £15 from Green he laid it, and the other five, and his heart all at her feet, but Lilian's mother, whilst overlooking Jem's proclivities, said they were "ower young to marry yet."

Stephen had become over-looker, but he did not like the work, and longed for pure air and green fields. Jem had got on very friendly terms with Basford in prison, and often talked with him about America, and when he went over to see Lilian he spoke to Stephen about that promised land, and the two told Mrs. Bowthrop how cheap farms could be bought on the prairies; and she was not at all unwilling to leave the old country. Jem sounded Basford about their joining him and his wife, and they willingly

agreed to the plan. Ebenezer learnt by a letter from Basford that the party had been formed, and he told Norman and his wife, and they too thought they would like to go to America, and this was arranged.

One morning in May, 1820, the whole party were on the main deck of the good ship "Rising Star," which sailed from Wilderspool, and they formed a happy group of emigrants. Of course Cuthbertson and Mattie got married, and although the latter laughed at her mother for prematurely mourning for Moore on each anniversary of Cobford Fair, she never would let Cuthbertson stay there without her on those festive occasions.

Joseph, who had saved money, felt lonely after his master's death, and having accidentally met Mrs. Somers in Lumechester, superintending the removal of her clock to a place of safety, he gallantly offered to take permanent charge of both, an offer readily accepted.

Mr. Robert lived to a great age, and acquired much wealth, but the memory of his wife was ever fresh, and he never married again; and Lawrie grew up to be a man possessed of a fine person, a noble disposition, and high intellectual power.

THE END.

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